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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SATURATING POLITICS

By

JEAN-CLAUDE COUTURE

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **SATURATING POLITICS** submitted by Jean-Claude Couture in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Dr. Terry Carson (Supervisor)

Dr. jan jagodzinski

Dr. Debra Shogan

Date: Aug 27/93

Abstract

The thesis explores the difficulties of engaging in a feminist/postmodern reading of *politics* as it is currently framed within the modernist state centered discourse of the Alberta Social Studies 30 program. Drawing on the postmodern sensibility of questioning where our questions come from, I endeavor to interrogate social studies concepts given to me to teach (e.g. *public vs. private issues, progress, identity, citizenship, power* and *security*). Populated by male gendered constructions of the Enlightenment, such concepts tend to be written into the curriculum in ways that exclude possibilities for students to work with what Grossberg calls their "affective investments" in everyday life.

Action research as a narrative form, invites me to write about the relational nature of exploring pedagogical issues. I begin in Chapter One by tentatively mapping out my thematic concern for the three one week cycles of action research with the students and their teacher.

Chapter Two draws on feminism and postmodernism to illustrate how the current modernist discourse in social studies strategically depoliticizes certain spaces and politicizes others.

In the action research phase of acting to retextualize political concepts in the classroom, Chapters 3 through 7 describe and reflect on the three weeks spent with three senior high social studies classes. Here I worked with the students and their teacher in efforts to redeploy the curriculum into the culture of everyday life. This redeployment was attempted by drawing on "affective investments" within the sites of student lives. Numerous activities (photo essays, textual poaching, short stories, presentations, radio programs, and discussions) engaged the students in a reading of their experiences as socially interested subjects who were invested in concerns and sites constructed outside of the places the current curriculum legitimatizes (e.g. sexual harassment, body image, feeling silenced at home/school/work, the inability to transgress the limit). By having myself, their teacher, and the students, *write in* our "affective investments" into questions of security, identity, and agency, eventually the social studies issue "What do you believe?, " was displaced with the question "What do you fear?" In this way a saturation of *politics* was invited, an opening of the ambiguities that constitute our highly contextual multiple positions as actors in everday life. Central to this saturation, in Chapters 6 and 7, is the search for a response to being silenced in our everyday lives. Drawing on Arendt's sense of natality (giving birth as going forward in uncertainty toward a new beginning), I offer a cross-reading of a feminist/postmodern response of acknowledging one's limits and going forward within those limits.

Action research reminds me that questions about our commitments and limitations cannot be injected into to classrooms without attention to the difficulties they invite. These are questions that call for an embodied reflexivity that problematize my position as a researcher, teacher, and

as a socially interested subject. The concluding chapter outlines these difficulties as *practical entanglements,* difficulties that I accept out of the ethical necessity of writing within the overburden of contradictions and ambiguities that are integral to the location of action research.

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CHAPTER 1
FEMINISM AND POSTMODERNISM: POSING SOME CURRICULUM DIFFICULTIES

Introduction

As a teacher of social studies in Alberta, over the last few years I have grown increasingly dissatisfied with my efforts to carve out a space where I feel comfortable with my pedagogical practice. This discomfort, as far as I can tell, does not stem from the approach of middle age where bellies sag as with expectations. Neither is the reality of having more students with difficulties at home or with personal problems. So, the difficulty by and large, does not stem from a malaise or sense of exhaustion from me or my students. I still look forward everyday (almost) to 'doing social studies' with teenagers who are as confused and energized by the world as I am. Perhaps the problem has focused in my mind over the last few years as I have been involved in trying answer the question: What do I believe Social Studies 30 should really be about for students?

I have tried to sort out the answer without much success. Working with other teachers on unit development projects and textbooks has not helped. I may know a lot more about what is possible to teach and how to teach it, but none of this work as helped to deal with the epistemological and ethical question: *as a human being what is worth knowing in the postmodern condition?* As a member of various Alberta Teachers' Association and Alberta Education committees over the last ten years, the answer has still eluded me. Curriculum and examination committees I have sat on have, understandably, avoided wrestling with this question head on. The current Program of Studies for Social Studies 30 and Diploma Examinations represent complex compromises that have largely side-stepped the concerns and issues that students face today. But in my eyes, shopping through the supermarket of political and economic ideologies in a few months does not cut it any more. Having students write an eight page "position paper" after sitting through 70 multiple choice questions (and looking forward to writing another exam in the afternoon) does not strike me as a particularly pedagogical practice.

Over the last three years I have been drawn into the cultural-social critiques of postmodernism and feminism. Tinkering on my own, I plodded my way through dense texts that raised questions about some of my basic assumptions about teaching and particularly, social studies. But reading these texts alone was like trying to carve figurines out of jello. It was fun and messy, but not very productive for me as a teacher engaged with students. It was not until the last year on a sabbatical leave that I was able to work with others making meaning with these texts. For me, a turning point was the first course I took last July with Madeline Grumet. The question I was asking about Social Studies 30 was not any different than questions she invites all

teachers to ask about their pedagogy: Are we exploring with students ways of being and feeling attached, grounded in ecology, and caring about their communities (Grumet, 1988, pp. 164-182)? Grumet reminded me of what I had forgotten about teaching; that I am, as a teacher, one who has under his care "other people's children" in the *middle place* called school. In this middle place with children, between home and the outside adult world, "We pass them from domesticity to public politics, from reproduction to production, from private to public life" (p. 164).

In this place called school, and in particular with my questions about Social Studies 30, I began to realize that what I was feeling with many of my students, was the failure to bridge the connection between private life and public life; the sense that the curriculum belonged not to the students but to rarefied and abstract conceptualizations about "human rights", "democracy" and "dictatorship". Since the introduction of the Diploma Examinations this detachment has increased in my classroom as we struggle to "cover" the curriculum and remind students about such important things as the distinction between Leninism and Stalinism, and debating whether or not the North Vietnamese really attacked the *Turner Joy* in the Gulf of Tonkin. The Diploma Examinations do the delimiting job they are designed for - to define and circulate among the teachers what are 'worthwhile' knowledge and skills. (Indeed students can now purchase commercially produced test booklets appropriately called "The Edge" which connotes for me a sliding signifier implying both the trope of the 'winning edge' and the bounding, the inscription of what is *in* and what is *out*.) Although a vitally important area for research, the impact of external examinations is one I am not exploring in this study. More generally, the issue has become for me, what Grumet framed as the problem in public school, of trying to do with other people's children what might not be appropriate. More recently interest groups, and so-called 'stake-holders' (a euphemism for agents protecting their own strategic interests), have collectively filled Social Studies 30 with a densely packed regimen of "learner outcomes". Perhaps they ought to be reminded of Grumet's concern: "the rules fit the curriculum, but the curriculum does not fit everybody" (p. 165).

A Thematic Concern Emerges

I read the current Social Studies 30 program as an attempt to situate students as future citizens who will enter its limiting *constructed world* of a liberal democratic polity. In their capacity as citizens it is expected that these students will enter the community to participate as "responsible citizens". So what's wrong with this?

My answer is both simple and complicated. In my role as a classroom teacher for over ten years my complicity in this modernist project of injecting students into this discourse of "responsible citizenship" has been a long and sometimes weary one. This weariness comes perhaps, from a Baudrillarian sense of exhaustion, of being caught in the simulacra of exhausted

signifiers: an over-crowded curriculum, Diploma Examinations, and conflicting societal expectations. What is important from a curriculum design perspective, is the inability of the Program of Studies and the way that it drives the Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination, to offer any structural space for exploring the postmodern condition and the challenge of locating a meaningful agency within it. This problem of occluding (pushing out, negating) meaningful opportunities for agency (either local or at wider levels) has been identified by Shapiro who captures a Foucauldian sense of how discourse acts to distribute power into the nooks and crannies of our lives: "This institutionalization of a state centered discourse incorporates a form of silence" (Shapiro, 1992, p. 100).

Increasingly I see the current Social Studies program as a project that produces and circulates the state constructed discourse to the students through texts and learning activities. Politics is almost always rarefied as *something done out there.* A powerful example of this occurred in my first meeting with the high school students involved in planning this thesis in February, 1993. I asked the students to list the first things they thought about when I said the word "politics". Out of 27 students not one student mentioned their own interests or anything positive. Typical comments were: "boring, nothing important happens, corruption, scam artists" (see Chapter 3). What do I make of their attitudes? I reflect back to an Environics Canada poll done in the last months of 1992. Only 18 per cent of adults surveyed had "some confidence" in political leaders, with 1 per cent reporting "a lot of confidence" in political leaders. This compares to 1976 when 56 per cent had "some" or "a lot" of confidence in political leaders (McLaren, 1993).

As a teacher taking direction from some of these leaders (through curriculum decisions, funding decisions for education), do I unproblematically position myself as a teacher given the mandate to inculcate in the students an appreciation for the political process in this country? The current Social Studies Program of Studies locates the students as *lacking* - they are the *ones* who need to be educated about politics. Perhaps the situation is more complex. When the premier of Alberta suggests that universities, schools and hospitals can find more money to operate in the face of cut-backs by holding bingos (CBC News, May 29, 1993) perhaps, there is a shared malaise that the students and I share about the way *politics* is. Perhaps it is constructed for us in such a way that silence and cynicism can be our only response.

What struck me in the students' comments that day was the sense of a profound *self-other* relation. Invariably, *politics* and *politicians* were conflated, *power* was universally linked with *government*. Their personal experiences with school and work, their *community*, was not something students thought about when they talked about *politics*. It is as if "politics" lived somewhere over the next hill for them. One student commented: "Why should I care about politics when it doesn't affect me". For this student there is a an echo of Nietzsche here - "nothing can be more tragic than the ass - to be burdened by a load one can neither bear nor

carry".

What I read into our conversation that day is the misguided success I have had (along with others I suspect), in convincing young people that "politics" should be indeed *something out there.* In the Social Studies Program of Studies the depoliticization of certain spaces (homes, schools, workplaces), and the politicization of others (provincial and federal governments), privileges certain ways of seeing and talking about political and economic systems. This was a conclusion shared by researchers who recently surveyed female adolescents in Canada. The report concluded that "Personal and political themes come together for young women" (Holmes, 1992, pp. 71-85). When asked what their top five concerns were, young women identified drugs, relationships, school, self, and the environment. But when asked what they would like to change in their lives, these young women ranked relationships, war/peace, the environment, poverty, and discrimination as the top five. What this study indicated, and what I have come to notice in my years of teaching, is that young women are more likely than males to forgo, to some degree, their own immediate interests and concerns in order to deal with larger issues. Again, consider the study's conclusion: "Young women give a great deal of thought to both the personal and political, and seem to care equally about both." This conclusion confirms what quantitative studies have indicated, that the immediate world and external world are "interwoven" for young women.

Action Research: A Method Teasing Out the Question

Action research offers me a vehicle for a self-critical engagement with the questions raised above. I share what Carr and Kemmis see as the opportunity in action research as a critical educational science, to call on practitioners to take on the "collaborative responsibility for the development and reform of education" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 209). I do not share, however, their enthusiasm for the *emancipatory promises* of collaborative activity. In reviewing the action research stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection, they describe what a critical science action research looks like: "the practitioner group takes joint responsibility for the development of practice, understandings, and situations, and sees these as socially-constructed in the interactive processes of educational life" (p. 203). In looking for a place for me as a teacher-researcher-graduate student who is muddling his way through feminism and postmodernism, I sense the impossibility of meeting the rarified communicative democracy embedded in their description of action research. I wonder about working with a fellow teacher who I have known for several years as a colleague and friend, but as someone who has not read feminist or postmodernist theory. Also, we disagree on many issues from classroom management strategies to evaluation strategies. In short, we do not form a community. So how can we possibly achieve what Carr and Kemmis call for in an action research group? Before I

begin I am also overwhelmed by the problem of including the students as collaborators in the project. How can they take "joint responsibility" for curriculum reform?

Rather than try to write myself in an action research project that Carr and Kemmis frame for me as a 'critically reflective practitioner,' I chose to resist this label because of the impossibility it creates for me. Carr and Kemmis seek to prescribe a way of doing action research that I find difficult to figure. I am skeptical of the style of research they suggest. So I import Caputo here, to allow me to generate a style of action research that liberates from "a single meaning" (1987, p. 156). After returning to focus on the curriculum problem that I began my action research with, I will outline an action research model that more stylistically serves the practical curriculum problem I am engaging. It is worth remembering, as Caputo does, that "We create as many truths as we require."

Before the first contacts with the school in February I thought my question might be something like this: Can agency and identity be located for females within the Social Studies 30 curriculum? After two days in the classroom I realized that this was a question that erased the presence of both myself and the teacher I was working with. This question also erased the difficulties of living in the question with the students.

Perhaps the question was never really about curriculum: it was about two teachers and students living in the difficulty of a curriculum problem. Stated simply the question has grown around us like a vine covering a house: *What challenges exist for teachers and students seeking to displace current modernist conceptions of what defines the political?* Following in the work of feminists who attempt to reconcile the challenges of the postmodernist critique of the possibility of identity, I will explore the possibilities of recovery of identities that are disarticulated and occluded within the current curriculum. The vehicle for my inquiry will be a feminist intersection with a postmodernist reading of the political and economic issues explored in Grade 12 *Topic A (Political and Economic Systems)* of the Alberta Social Studies program. As an action research project, this inquiry will seek a location of identity in the participation of students and teachers as co-researchers in the strategic displacement and interruption of the curriculum as it attempts to inscribe citizens as ready made subjects within the nation state. I proceed then with Butler's cautionary note that "language swallows everything" and that any description is dangerous (1990, pp. 79-81).

The Location of Action Research

The teacher I contacted to work with was Rod, a colleague in my department and someone I had shared some questions with about the social studies program. Working with his three classes (two Social Studies 20 classes and one Social Studies 10 class) had some practical advantages. For some time, Rod was interested in opening up the curriculum in his courses as

well. In his grade eleven classes he had been working on the impact of the Industrial Revolution on family life and his students were exploring the changes for women in this context. Rod's grade ten class was exploring issues surrounding power and discrimination. In my first meeting with Rod I emphasized my interest in limiting the impact on his class in terms of his covering the requirements of the Program of Study. As my letter to Rod and local school officials indicated, the work would always be sensitive of the need not to crowd out the 'essentials' prescribed in the curriculum (See Letter Feb. 14, Appendix A 1). (This proved a difficulty we could not overcome without writing in our own new definitions of these essential outcomes.) So by mid-February, 1993, Rod and I had made our initial plans. I met with the students briefly and we indicated that in three separate one week cycles (in February , April, and May) the two of us would be working together with them. From the beginning Rod and I accepted the different interests we held in pursuing this work. We shared a commitment to explore re-readings of social studies concepts. While this was a small nodal point of shared interest, it was one we both vigorously shared in the three weeks I spent in his classroom.

I do not see this action research as describing anything but what I sensed locally, throughout the three weeks. I do not try to write for Rod - his read backs in the appendices do this. Neither do I try to write for the students. Their work stands in the pages that follow as examples of what might be practical to accomplish with students. I write what I might do for my own pedagogical understanding. *To write is to locate ourselves in text.* I am writing *about* student and teacher experiences, and the research I am undertaking is, therefore, from a privileged position. There is a tension in the work I am proposing since I come to the project from a different subject position than that of the students. My position is that of someone who critiques the assumptions that frames much of the conventional discourse about politics and government. I read my position after Probyn's sense that I can only describe a constructed location where I have negotiated various "locales" or epistemes with the teacher and students that I am working with (1990).

The prospect of 'doing research' in the school I was on leave from presented advantages. I knew the students and the staff, and as our work proceeded and difficulties were encountered this connection to the community would later prove invaluable, as Chapter Six will indicate. As Rod explained in our first meeting with one class, as teachers we had similar curriculum concerns (Rod indicated "I need to try some new ways of dealing with the concepts of change and human rights"), but there were differences in the possible solutions we brought to the project. Besides, as Rod indicated to the students, we both had a tendency to "try anything once, no matter how weird." The students laughed at this; somehow this comment seemed so important to me. Going forward, no matter "how weird" was always one of the things I respected about his practice.

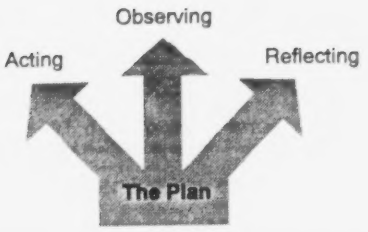
Throughout my time in Rod's classes I was always drawn, as were many of his students, to

his fish tank. In the aquarium swam a variety of colorful tropical fish of different colours and shapes. Some swam vigorously around the tank, others hid near the bottom or behind plastic reefs and ornaments. The students joked that this was "the school within a school." One of the fish, a rather large black one, had been blinded in one eye in a fight with another fish. Rather than skulk in the bottom of the tank, it continued its aggressive ways - always one of the first to feed, continually establishing territory by swimming around. Yet it was an odd sight to watch - whenever approaching the top of the tank to feed, or another fish - it swam sideways. As the days went on in my work with the class, I thought about that fish swimming on its side. I wondered at times like that odd little fish, whether or not we as teachers and students are confronted with the choice that it had - to continue on no matter "how weird" we appear.

So I return to the curriculum related question. In my reading, the project involved working with students in the hope to seek a recovery of sites of human agency, of subjects becoming selves in a conversation between feminism and postmodernism. The political effects of the occlusion of student political agency are revealed in different ways. The depoliticization of certain spaces and politicization of others, privileges certain ways of seeing and talking about political and economic systems (see Chapters Two and Three). Research that specifically examines this sense of being silenced will be referred to in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. In short, this project is about the crisis of representation in the curriculum. I wish to de-center the government's response to the question - *what is politics?* I also wish to recast the normative foundation of what constitutes the subject known as "citizen" in the current Program of Studies. The action research will also open up a contestation of the citizen as a unitary subject who engages other objects (citizens). Following is a brief synoptic view of the action research being undertaken in the chapters that follow.

An Action Research Story Line

The action research spiral of Kemmis and MacTaggart (1988) represents a useful narrative line for presenting the non-linearity of action research. In their diagrammatic representation (p. 14) they frame action research as a series of spirals that include the four steps of planning, acting, observation and reflection. As each loop of planning, acting, observation and reflection is completed, a new cycle is begun. While the spiral model demonstrates the linkage between the four moments in action research, I offer a representation of the action research undertaken in this project that positions the planning stage as the generative relation that powers acting, observation, and reflection. This arrow, split into three parts, indicates each one of the cycles of our action research. Simply put, each one week cycle, was grounded on a plan that inscribed certain possibilities for that week. While the actions that followed were highly dissipative and fractal, my observation and reflection of them are linked to the text of the plan.



One phase or cycle in a feminist/postmodernist reading of Social Studies 30 concepts

This alternate representation admits my changing positions over time in doing action research. I see here perhaps Caputo's sense of going forward in a world of flux (1987, p. 239). The planning moment in action research represents coherent structure - a world with limited "guardrails," with some epistemological guidelines. What follows from the plan; the action, observation, and reflection is slippery territory. From Caputo, I sense in action research an emergence from the firmness of the "transcendental high ground" to "learning to get along in the concrete without the guardrails of metaphysics" (p. 239). Each of the three one week cycles of our work were rooted in a deliberate plan to interrupt and displace a dominant curriculum discourse. The text that forms the body of this thesis then, represents only small bits of what took place in the classrooms over the course of the project. These small bits are those that emerge out of the plan.

This representation of our action research suggests that as each of the three weeks with the students began, a discrete set of plans were developed. Given the weeks that lapsed between the classroom visitations I believe that this is a much more accurate portrayal of what transpired. As Rod and I read through the student work generated in each cycle and as I read through a wider range of literature, it became clear that we were engaged in a series of distinct cycles that were linked only in a broad thematic way. This thematic linkage was, of course, the reconsideration of the social studies curriculum within feminism/postmodernism.

This representation also avoids the difficulty that a spiral model implies - that of suggesting that the project represents a connected movement from one position to another. A spiral suggests that the individuals move from A to B (albeit in a non-linear manner). The split arrows above suggests no such movement. It describes a narrative line that suggests the unfolding/enfolding of the plan as lived in their rounds of action research. Yet taken together each round is related and grounded in its exploration of the "thematic concern" (Kemmis, 1990, p. 94).

I see the split arrows model as a narrative scheme that accomplishes some sense of what Lather might have meant in her description of deconstruction as an attempt "to demonstrate how a text works against itself" (1991 b, p. 82). As the action research goes forward from the moment of planning into the three moments of action, observation and reflection, any attempt to describe

what follow will remain partial and incomplete. The "descriptions" and "prescriptions" (Kemmis 1990, p. 29) that the researcher employs *are invariably grounded in the plan which disseminates the action.* The plan both limits and produces what follows. In this model there is a recognition that action research is invariably about developing "our understandings while at the same time bringing about changes in concrete situations" (Carson, 1990, p. 167). Again, the arrows flowering out from the base remind me that what is critical to action research is the plan, the intention, that informs and assures us in the world. This is true for the variety of orientations of action research ranging from those concerned with technical questions to critically reflective ones. Acting, observing, and reflecting appear in this representation of action research as the unstable possibilities that are only partially captured in text.

In this way, *the plan* in our action research is represented by a series of student learning activities that were attempts to engage students as co-inquirers into issues raised by feminism/postmodernism. Our plan was to engage students in conversations on thematic concerns raised by feminism/postmodernism. As each of the three one week cycles of action research unfolded, I see three separate plans informing our conversational play. I simultaneously distrust these plans and realize that they are needed to do the work, to "take a first cut" in Caputo's words (1987, p. 262). In what follows, I will outline the action research work. Firstly, I will offer a brief overview of the initial reflections or what is sometimes called 'reconnaissance', that outlines our thematic concern in more detail. Generated from our initial subject positions as teachers, researchers, and students, reconnaissance is a tool we take up that only gets us started. Next will follow a review of the three one week cycles of action research that were undertaken. Central to these descriptions will be the discussion of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These of course do not live separately, they are nodal points that describe moments in our engagement. So I struggle to capture Caputo's sense of keeping "the play in play" by acknowledging that these descriptions continually threaten to exclude and limit, to normalize and level (pp. 262-263).

A Synopsis of the Action Research Process: Chapter Summaries and Reconnaissance

In Chapter 2, I begin by interrogating the modernist conversations about "ideology" and "responsible citizenship" that voraciously consume the possibility of students acting as socially interested subjects. It is my sense that the current curriculum has become a strategic device that erases the body from politics. To seek out a wider sense of the student's subjectivity (as the curriculum pretends to claim my requiring students to "Defend a Position", for example, in the current Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination) requires a dramatic interruption of the state centered discourse that produces and circulates illusory boundaries between public and private spheres. A conversation between key feminist and postmodernist writers will explore this

separation between public and private spheres, as well as the modernist figurations of signifiers such as *security* and *citizenship*. This review of the literature will reveal my intention to visit possibilities for a inserting opportunities for more authentic human agency into the modernist discourse of "responsible citizenship" embedded in the Social Studies 30 program.

The Three One Week Phases of the Action Research

Phase One

The first cycle or phase of our research, described in Chapter 3, took place from February 23 to 27, 1993. This initial week sees us as students and teachers, reading ourselves against feminism and its critique of patriarchal institutions and practices. The work in this chapter represents an exploration of how questions raised by feminism and postmodernism can be worked through in a social studies classroom. Central to this chapter is a questioning of my role as a researcher from the academy, and how cultural studies can be ethically carried on between the students, myself, and their teacher. The activities, observations, and reflections in this chapter focus on establishing nodal points of a common language that we might share about a range of societal issues that impinge on a re-reading of the social studies curriculum. Activities grounded in a cultural studies framework, include a discussion of films that explore gender issues, a student survey about current issues, and opportunities to explore novel ways of engaging the possibilities for agency in the postmodern.

Phase Two

After a six week lapse, I returned to the school in the week of April 19 to 23. This phase, described in Chapter 4, focused on the simultaneity of the contradictions that living in the postmodern presents to us. By returning to issues surrounding gender, Rod and I planned to problematize with the students, the modernist construction of "progress". This was done through an exploration of the objectification of women (as circulated through the media, and in popular culture), and the impact this has had on the self-image of many young women. Through an exploration of the students' reading of some aspects of popular culture the question was raised about the efficacy of the belief in modernism that "change is always for the better". To demonstrate how social, political, and economic conditions in the postmodern defy a definitive critique of "progress," the students responded to the film *Grand Canyon*. The film offered to the students and us as teachers, opportunities to question our own assumptions about progress and our own commitments and constructed meanings in our cultural practices.

Phase Three

The third cycle, introduced in Chapter 5, began to take form in mid-April with the planning

for student activities coming out of our reflections on Phase Two. Drawing on a phenomenological reading of the emotional commitments brought into sites of action (deciding between complicity and resistance for example); the plan was to have students engage the film *Pump Up the Volume!* Yet, as Chapter 6 indicates, we encountered some parental opposition to our use of the film. This opposition served to re-direct the action research into an examination of my own interests and commitments as a socially interested subject, and to remind me of the messy places action research calls us to. In Chapter 7, the completion of the third cycle of research is described as the students read back to the film *Pump Up the Volume!* As the last phase of the action research comes to a close, I review student readings and their tactics for dealing with the issues raised in the last phase of our work. The thesis concludes in Chapter 8 with a re-visiting of the question: *What challenges exist for teachers and students seeking to displace current modernist conceptions of what defines the political?* Chapter 8 explores the sense that the question itself is coded in such a way that it threatens to invite a normalized response to the current Social Studies 30 program. As an action research project that struggles to continue to "write against itself" (Lather, 1991), I conclude by resisting a reading of the thesis not as *overcoming challenges,* but of *living within the challenges.*

Given this brief overview of the three one week cycles of the project, the following will extrapolate some of the thematic concerns identified in the above. Central to the challenge of displacing modernist conceptions of what defines the political, is the issue of identity and agency. From Judith Butler I raise the implication that by changing how modernist political conceptions are *written on* students (particularly females), new "signification practices" (Butler, 1990, p. 145) will emerge in our work with the students. As Butler indicates, "language refers to an open system of signs by which intelligibility is insistently created and contested" (p. 145). From Butler, I derive the sense that the rules that generate the subject's sense of "I", are worthy of our work as action researchers problematizing *the political.* Butler sees subjects not determined by the rules of signification, but rather through "a regulated process of repetition that both conceals itself and enforces its rules through the production of substantializing effects" *(Ibid.).* For Butler, "agency" is to be teased out or "located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition." Again, from Butler, I see the construction of identity as political work that deploys strategies for agency, for acting in the world to produce and generate displacements and interruptions of the repetitions that are part of the ontology of the curriculum. These productions will, in our action research, represent "local strategies" that I have outlined earlier (such as engaging the film *Pump Up the Volume!*).

One of the central "effects" of the modernist Social Studies 30 ontology that this action research will explore is that of an agency to go forward to *speak up.* In Chapter 5 the challenge is taken up to going beyond simply identifying a problem in the curriculum. What I am seeking

here is what Chang called "the potential for developing a communicative self" (1991). Chang's sense of *self* is one that draws on a wide ranging conversation between social psychology and postmodernism. I wish to draw into this mix the phenomenological sense of doing philosophical thinking at the site of "personal engagement" described through phenomenology. These are the slippery local situations that resist description in research that I referred to earlier from Probyn's work. In Chapters 6 and 7, by appropriating the response of *talking hard*, I hope to offer a feminist response within postmodernism to the current oppressive effects of the modernist state-centered discourse offered by the current Program of Studies. Framing this response will be an exploration of my personal engagement with questions of political action in daily life.

Throughout Chapters 5 through 7 I draw on Massing's phenomenological research (1991) that explores silence. It is interpreting the experiences of girls in a hermeneutic-phenomenological sense that allows me to begin to understand what it means to subjects to be "silent"; how one positions one's self in "being silent", of not "speaking up" for one's "existence" and "capabilities". I deploy Massing's work in a way that is committed to interrupting silence, opening up silence, and exploring its spaces. I seek to go beyond "voices" of the Other as a metaphor to engage the possibilities of going forward, of being disruptive. I position both myself, Rod (the teacher I am working with), and the students, in this struggle in multiple contingent subject positions (see Chapter 6). There is an explicit normative grounding in Massing's work on women *speaking out* that would be difficult to escape given her commitment to liberate or *give voice*, to overcome the silence. Important, from a pedagogical understanding of students' lived experience, any dialogical action research practice shares this moral grounding. Yet in working with the students I resist deploying the power of hermeneutic-phenomenological codings of *presence* or a *structure of feelings* (Grossberg, 1992, p. 62). The phenomenological project for me as our research continues, stands in danger of trying to write the answers before the questions are asked. Foucault's warning of trying to capture a 'whole society' in its "living reality" stands before me (1985, p. 11). In working with students and their readings of daily life, I am continually reminded of the risks in cultural studies of asking questions that already code the answers.

For women (and less so for men) to be able to agentically 'speak up' involves risk. Through the interrogation of women's experiences 'speaking up' we see the possibilities of drawing from phenomenological research. Living in "ambiguous uncertainty" (Massing, 1991, p. 34) of oneself limits agency. It inscribes the limits of possibilities for becoming a socially interested subject in the world. In Chapter 5 I explore how intersecting feminist/postmodern readings of *acknowledging the limits*, and choosing to *transgress the limits* offers a site for the subject to start anew. The analogue for 'starting anew' I draw from is that of Arendt's sense of the mother's engagement in giving birth, in bringing a new life into the world (1958).

So in the course of the three phases of our action research, this question visited our planning: In our school, will it be possible to achieve some representation at the site/locale of resistance and complicity? This is the issue implied by Linda Hutcheon who calls for a representation that does not pretend to be transhistorical or transtemporal. She sees the crisis of representation claimed by postmodernists as somewhat disingenuous since we never have known what is *Real* (Hutcheon, 1989, p. 33). She seeks a representation of identity and agency that problematizes itself, that uses parodic inscription and subversion, that deconstructs and rebuilds new codes. Transformation of new subjectivities involve representation and re-colonization of bodies. The bodies are our students - all seventy-five of them in grades 10 and 11 in a close knit community of 10,000 people. Rod and I must be mindful of the fact at all times that they are, as Grumet says, "other people's children." There is tension here, caught between the worlds that are inscribed as 'private' and 'public'. Politicizing the body is *very* political activity. *It is indeed, the first political activity.* For example, in Chapter Three our research begins by having the students *write themselves in* new ways, to problematize and disrupt both their sense of their locales. In subsequent chapters in response to the postmodern reading of political economy, feminist readings of the curricular political and economic issues outline where sites of resistance may be located (e.g. abusive relationships, harassment at school, problems at work). Lather has laid out some of the ground work here in terms of identifying possibilities for deconstructing cultural/political cells of authority and the role of the individual in resisting in the postmodern condition (1991 b, p. 160). The student-teacher activities outlined in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will be examples of strategic resistances, silences, and complicitousness.

Our parallel efforts (I resist "collaboration" as a marker of our work given the multiplicity of our local subjectivities in one location) will situate each of us as we read and are *written on* by various texts: print sources, films, student interpretations, our divergent languages of description, and the eventual uncovering of what Argyis and Schon called "theories in use" (1974). The foundation for understanding this emergent "theory in use" will be situated in the feminist/postmodern seeking out of transformations of understandings of the curriculum in Social Studies 30.

In Social Studies 30 classes, when examining political themes such as *security, participation* and *resistance,* opportunities for students to "scribble in the margins" of dominant texts will be explored for their pedagogic potential. Such "scribbling" includes recontextualization, extending story lines, and a variety of other strategies for allowing the reader to *write themselves into* the text. Framed as "textual poaching" (after de Certeau 1984, and Jenkins, 1992) such activities offer an opportunity for students to tactically deploy and circulate their meanings of texts, to expropriate and appropriate text in liminal sites where politics can be saturated with meanings.

By offering students opportunities to 'get wide' with their understanding of the semiotics of

culture, they will be able to reveal for themselves the relations of power in their daily lives. Women objectified by the media, consumerism, homophobia, harassment at school, abuse at home and at work, lifestyle choices, are just a few examples of how the material reality of political effects need to be drawn into a saturated definition of the political. This saturation effort is deployed directly against distinctions that try to define serious vs. superficial political struggles (Grossberg, 1992, p. 370). For my co-researcher and the students, this involves highly fractal forms of conversation and analysis that reveal to students the self-contradictory and self-undermining statements that are necessary to live and work in the postmodern (Gilbert, 1992, p. 53). One specific example then would be the interrogation of the concepts of "citizenship rights" and "security" as a discursively constructed fictive loyalty that requires a re-reading in the postmodern. In a society such as Canada where 54 percent of women are afraid to walk outside at night (*Edmonton Journal*, Nov. 29, 1992, p. A.3), the signification embedded in terms such as "citizenship rights" and "security" becomes problematic. As Lyotard reminds us, the search for grand narratives offers the state a method of leading the population "down the path of progress" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 32). Recently, a 20 year old woman who was sexually assaulted and knifed in Calgary was charged $181 by the city's ambulance service for the trip to the hospital after she was found (*Edmonton Journal*, June 16, 1993, p. A6). The women complains that "This is going to make it tough, I'm already behind on my rent." She finds it difficult to keep up working as a waitress. This story calls me back to Lyotard - *for whom is this progress*?

What meaning can women give to "security" where every seventeen minutes in Canada a woman is sexually assaulted? One might read the Social Studies 30 curriculum then, as a metanarrative that frames inquiry into political and economic issues in a specific male gendered way when it frames "security" in ways that exclude issues of violence against women. Are citizens in fact becoming "more free" as the liberal discourse claims? "The people" become signified in a manner that obliterates contradiction and difference (say between men and women). The term *polity* becomes a signifier that slides upon embedded contradictions - who exactly is protected in this *polity*? Yet when closely examined locally, these signifiers reveal their largely fictive nature in the postmodern. In February 1993, I was at a friend's house listening to his police scanner. A call was patched through to a cruiser about a women being assaulted by her husband. The officers were in a restaurant on their break. One of the officers simply said, "tell her we're on our way". The officer then told the dispatch, "we'll finish up dinner and be on our way in fifteen minutes."

So just who is protected in the modern state? Issues that divide "the polity" are represented in the sea of signs as "challenges to governing" in the modern state. One refrain commonly heard is "the people are divided on the issue." "Public opinion" becomes a telepolitical coding of this emptiness of signs in the simulacra of this fictive creation of "the people" as some

undifferentiated mass (Wexler, 1990), p. 270. I seek in this thesis, an exploration of how this coding of signs and signification might be interrupted where new and highly fractal forms of localized political meaning and activity can occur. Perhaps these interruptions will represent an articulation of what Laclau and Mouffle called for; "the displacement into new areas of social life of the egalitarian imaginary constituted around the liberal-democratic discourse" (Laclau and Mouffe, 1990, p. 165). Whatever specific forms the fractal interruptions take in the students' writing and explorations, the power of the nation-state discourse to limit the highly fractal knowing that is possible within the multiplicity of possible knowings of concepts such as "security," will be undermined.

Again, an important vehicle for these disruptions will be film, drawing on "textual poaching" strategies identified by de Certeau (1984) and Jenkins (1992). Textual poaching offers methodologies for interrupting the Social Studies 30 program. Briefly stated, textual poaching involves critical and interpretive practices by viewers of popular culture that are directed at re-shaping the characters and stories offered to them. For example, through recontextualization, fans can write in missing scenes into an episode of Star Trek (e.g. where Spock discovers a dark secret about his father), or cross-overs where characters from different television series meet. Other strategies include personalization, where fans write themselves into a program, or eroticization, where fans extend stories to include romantic entanglements they have derived (e.g. Kirk and Spock written as gay lovers).

How does textual poaching offer the possibility for an aesthetic that opens the door for human agency and identity in the postmodern? This is the question explored in planning our activities with students. Reflecting on the work produced by the students and our discussions with them about this work, forms a significant part of the descriptions in Chapters 3, 4, and 7. Film cannot be considered in isolation to its political and/or historical effects as Williams argues (1980, pp. 55-56). Films, like poems, buildings, fashion or music, carry the feelings of people. In the postmodern sensibility, film can be seen as a carrier of multiple meanings and whose 'meanings' can become tactical deployments by viewers. Attempts to naturalize or essentialize categories of human characters (e.g. the homeless, women, children) in these media are disrupted in textual poaching. By injecting their subjectivities into television and film, students engage texts as opportunities for *writing themselves in or out*. By intersecting text with political questions centered on such issues as *personal fear* and *security*, there is a disruption of the state centered discourse offered in the Program of Studies.

The work ahead will question the possibility of 'slipping in between the signs' of state centered discourse. Perhaps the action research will reveal that in this project, such opportunities were not realized. One possibility may be the realization of an identity and human agency framed in the sense that Kenneth Gergen writes about in *The Saturated Self* (1991, p. 258). This is a

possibility of human agency that builds identity as "a grafting of mutually incorporating intelligibilities". What is powerful for me in this postmodern metaphor, *is the admission of my vulnerability yet the possibility of a tenacious socially interested subjectivity that seeks to propel itself into the world.* A possibility for locating such tenaciousness is explored through Chapter 5 (e.g. reading the film *Grand Canyon*) and elaborated upon in Chapters 6 and 7.

Foucault reminds me that I could only slowly begin to understand my subjectivity when I ask "How have my questions been produced?" (Foucault, 1985, pp. 11-12). The questions raised in this introduction might be emerging as I remind myself of the thesis project - to momentarily reconstitute a curriculum that opens up spaces for what Butler might describe as the "enmired subjectivity" of female students in the social studies program (1992, pp. 148-149).

The Thesis as a Narrative Form

As I begin the narrative that frames students into a location, I am reminded of their energy and enthusiasm. Their humour (full of irony and parody) invigorates and re-constitutes their subjectivities. Their frantic days in school are full of contradictions and pastiche, yet only a constipated sense of pedagogy would deny them as being anything but fully engaged in the world. Their energy, siphoned off and momentarily channeled, is what powers this project. I see now that Baudrillard got it partly right - they do not live with exhausted signifiers, they exhaust the signifiers and then rebuild them. The projects students wrote and the energy with which they propelled themselves into their work fills me with optimism. I was reminded of their agency by a story one women told on *Gabireau* (CBC, Feb. 16, 1993). When asked why she played with Barbie dolls as a little girl, the women responded, "because Barbie's hard plastic body meant you could hit the boys back and she would still be alive... it was because Barbie was a survivor. Barbie never dies."

This is a useful story because it illustrates the danger of thinking that what follows in these pages locates these students. Throughout my three weeks with them they muddled and bewildered, they frustrated and confounded - but always they produced a world in sites that *they* could live in. It was their classroom and their life, not mine. I have left them now. What follows is a whisper of our conversations together. All writing, all text, serves to exclude as much as it includes. Yet, like the woman's story about using Barbie dolls *as weapons*, perhaps less is told by our lives, than that which we choose to reconstitute and tell through our stories. One such story follows.

The narrative that follows, in a chapter by chapter form, is limited and constructed within other stories that count as my memory. This is the relational underpinning that holds any narrative together. So the genre of action research, complete with "moments" of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, is linked to experiences with others in the classroom. Driving the

descriptions of the "moments" is my encounter with feminism and postmodernism, my own subjectivity and difficulties that remain excluded or refracted. So, as the chapters that follow unfold, I ask the reader to forgive the (occasional?) discontinuities and inconsistencies. Action research remains in the postmodern, what Gergen suggests of all text; an indication of our relatedness where our narratives remain "languages of relationship" (1991, p. 160). "Coherence and contradiction cease to matter as one takes pleasure in the expanded possibilities of being in a socially saturated world" (p. 170). As with our lives, action research remains stubbornly saturated and certainly resistant to a narrative consistency.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Politics with Bodies

Feminist theory to me, has represented a strategic way of recovering the possibility of acting in a more pedagogical way. For me, part of this struggle has been to question the current ongoing displacement of "emotion" and "affect" from the social studies curriculum. Of course this questioning of what is allowed as 'pertinent knowledge' is a project that has been taken up by writers outside of feminist writing. For example, Jean Gebser's work (only very recently being translated from German) explores the fragmentation of modernity (Kramer, 1992). The modernist dualism that removes the body from the classroom (because that it does not perform any "positive" cognitive function) is one of many erasures that Gebser's work takes up (*Ibid.* p. 193). Exploring the depth and breadth of this dualism, as well as wanting to move from a critique of modernism to an ethical deployment of pedadogical alternatives, were opportunities many feminist writers seemed to offer. Acknowledging that this thing called 'feminist theory' represents a multiplicity of difference, in the following I will attempt to locate with selected feminist writers, strategic intersections that have contributed to a mapping out of a possibility for a re-working of politics as framed by the Social Studies 30 program.

The connections I draw from this review of literature should not be read as a summation or synthesis of anything that remotely relates to *a feminist theory*. Such a project would create the illusion that there is anything more than contestation and irreconcilable differences within the literature. Rather, I see this review as brief postmodern "apostrophizing" of the writers - what McHale (1992, p. 101) might read as constructing a narrative *using the characters as I read them*.

Or to put it another way, I may not understand *feminism* but it sure gives me a lot to think about. My relationship with the literature I have read is a problematic one. What factors have brought me to some texts and not others? What draws me to one part of a text and not another? Is there anything I have received in this review of the literature that I can communicate to except by making these authors my own? What if I mis-read them and you reader, call me on it? What then do we have in this text but two apostrophes meeting, trying to condition the other of its own right to possess the authors that follow. With this proviso I proceed.

Gender at the "End Of Innocence"

Jane Flax positions feminist theory "as a type of postmodern philosophy" that "reveals and contributes to the growing uncertainty within Western intellectual circles about the appropriate grounding and methods for explaining and interpreting human experience" (1990, pp. 40-41).

Employing her tactic of "the conversation" with feminism and postmodernism (Flax, 1990 b),

I wish to discuss my reading of Flax and how she engages the limits and possibilities of postmodernism. I wish to intercept her conversation in such a way that I might build a base from which to subsequently examine two crucial contributions from feminist writing specifically concerned with *location*, and the *private/ public* dichotomy. This reading will hopefully clarify the action research I have undertaken in terms of the contribution that feminism (as a postmodern inquiry) can make to displace and interrupt key parts of the current Social Studies 30 program.

In an appropriately titled piece, "The End of Innocence" (1992), Flax raises the central question - how can feminists constitute themselves and act appropriately in the postmodern condition? As a fragmented group under siege from many quarters, they are challenged to defend their various programs (academic credibility, community activism, ending racial discrimination and homophobia). With the erosion of the Enlightenment metanarratives (the search for Truth, achieving the real, the split between fact/value), feminists have been thrown into the soup of "essential contestability" (p. 450) of meaning with everyone else. Within the contingency they find themselves in, feminists must construct meaningful responses to the most important question of all: how can they act effectively to improve the place of women in society? Flax maps out a program that centers on women understanding their work in terms of the "oppressive effects" that patriarchy generates. This program is focused on "effects" at the local level within a postmodern contingency. This sense of working at the local level will be explored later in this chapter.

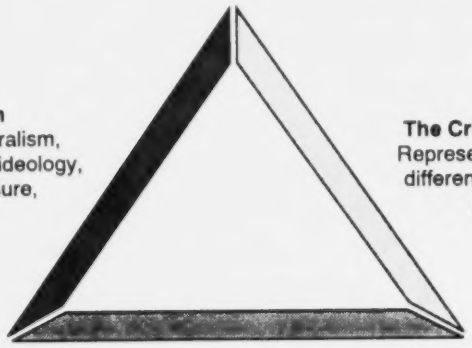
Flax makes the point quite convincingly that feminism is now the most overtly political inquiry taking place in postmodernism The unpacking of gender systems represents the most powerful interrogation of relations of domination today. In her view, the Marxist and other totalizing inquiries have been superseded by feminism. Flax effectively draws on Machiavelli as a guide for a feminist political action. It was Machiavelli who reminded us that we need to construct a politics that is informed by a morality and knowledge "appropriate to its unique domain." (p. 459). Flax recovers from Machiavelli a sense of the pragmatism that anchors us as subjects to the everyday "effects of power". I will argue later in the chapter that by focusing at the local level to the "effects of power" we avoid creating a curriculum that rarefies politics to levels of abstraction that students find empty of meaning.

It might be useful to integrate Flax's reading of postmodernism with my own. I wish to elaborate on my own engagement with postmodernism as introduced in Chapter One. As Lather as pointed out, postmodernism/poststructuralism has become a "code name for the crisis of confidence in Western conceptual systems" (Lather, 1991 b, p. 159). This "code" resists conventional conceptual frameworks, but despite this difficulty she offers a summary chart that attempts to grasp "absurdly" all of the key elements of postmodernism. Despite the danger of

reductionism and creating a sense of categories, one invariably needs to represent something as postmodernism in order to use it in the world. So I share Lather's frustration with her chart and offer the one that follows despite its limitations. I have closely considered several fine authors' discussions *about* postmodernism; (Roseneau 1992, Jencks 1992, Borgmann 1992). Yet when living in the condition that is being described it seems inevitable in the end that one is best off to *construct* postmodernism for oneself. This involves writing a narrative that is a strategic writing with the particular purposes we all have, as living subjects (McHale 1992, p. 2). What follows is one such *strategic writing*, located as someone framing an action research project about postmodernism, while living within postmodernity.

I offer the following diagrammatic representation as a synthetic drawing together of what postmodernism sometimes represents as an idea in my mind. McHale reminds me, that "there 'is' no such *thing* as postmodernism" (p. 1) as an identifiable object that has a fixed essence. Like the Holy Trinity of my Catholic youth, postmodernism defies categories and concretization. The "three persons in one God" trope is what I employ in my diagram (I substitute three categories for the three persons of God). This may be blasphemy to both Catholics and postmodernists alike. I ask only your indulgence, not forgiveness.

The Trinity of Postmodernism



The Problem of Truth
Decanonization, poststructuralism, discourse, quote, genealogy, ideology, authenticity, resisting closure, intertextuality

The Crisis of Categories
Representation, semiology, difference, alterity, parody, contestation

The Problem of Unitary Subjects
Subjectivity, inscription, schziocriticism, Otherness, counter memory, phonocentric, phallocentric, contestation

Caught as I am as a social studies teacher riding the wave of citizenship education, I am required under the Program of Studies for Social Studies 30 to foster critical thinking in order that students as future citizens can make 'reasoned choices'. Realizing that such a project is embedded in a modernist project of seeking *Truth* and with students framed as unitary subjects

who can makes decisions for "themselves", the Trinity above causes me difficulty. This difficulty is captured somewhat by constructing a sense of what has become of politics as we near the twenty-first century. Lewis Lapham has captured the problems with the modernist assumptions in his description of the last U.S. presidential campaign (1992, pp.11-13). Framed as a "bleak comedy" he sees the postmodern political imagination as "the product of the mass media" (p. 11). He gives these examples of our current malaise.

> Both candidates descended bravely into the wells of bathos, submitting to the ordeals of public confession at the feet of Phil Donahue and Barbara Walters. Both offered tales of emotional distress (George's maligned children, Bill's alcoholic stepfather) as testaments to their status as genuine human beings worthy of pity and love. Both embraced the memory of the newly canonized Harry Truman as proof of their acquaintance with the virtues of the common man. Bill played the saxophone for Arsenio Hall, and Arnold Schwarzenegger wandered around the country as a latter-day Hercules attesting to the truth that George was "no wimp" (p. 12).

As Lapham's description suggests, the postmodern polity is a brilliant and plastic phantasm that engages us with the richness of images that fade as quickly as they rise to our consciousness. I owe Borgmann (1992, pp. 78-109) for these insights into three components of postmodernism: brilliance, richness, and pliability. The condition of politics as it implodes on itself in the hyperreeal mediascape is a sensory feast for me as a social studies teacher and avid news junkie. I find myself as I read through postmodernism, thinking about a campfire I was sitting around not long ago. A young child threw an empty plastic Kraft marshmallows bag into the flames. I watched as the image of the "Stay Puffed Man" began to grow momentarily as gases filled the inside of the bag. Suddenly the smile on his face began to wither and in an instant both he and the bag shriveled and were consumed in a combination of green and blue flames. How might I read the "Stay Puffed Man" that night? Is he an allegory for the political man in the postmodern? Or am I (all puffed up with my knowledge and expertise about how to teach social studies) the "Stay Puffed Man"? As a middle aged heterosexual male with all the privileges laced into being a teacher, can I be anything but the "Stay Puffed Man"? This thing that is constructed as 'postmodernism' invites several readings of the withering of the "Stay Puffed Man". In a sense then I cannot review the literature on postmodernism as much as I am finding as I write, that *it is reviewing me.* So as I intersect Flax and postmodernism, I find myself being written by the allegory of the "Stay Puffed Man".

The Stay Puffed Man: A Semiotics of My Position as Researcher

As Gilbert indicates, "the semiotics of culture becomes central to understanding and negotiating power relations in the information society" (Gilbert, 1992, p. 53). How can I raise doubts about the future of citizenship and citizens if I ignore my own entitlements and complicity in preparing to work with students in a public school? How do I resist sliding into

language games that ignore the disparate subjectivities of the group I keep calling 'students.' It is so easy to think of them as a group, to write them as a unitary subject. This temptation is the one Flax and others remind us to resist when talking about *woman*. Using Lyotard, I see this slippage reflecting in the temptation in any writing about *the project* to manage the "clouds of sociality according to input/output matrices, following a logic which implies that their elements are commensurable and that the whole is determinable" (1984, p. xxiv). So is the effect of my writing and my work to suture the students into the project, positioning me as the Stay Puffed Man floating overhead as in the movie *Ghostbusters*?

As I construct my sense of postmodernism around the figuration of the Stay Puffed Man, I see an opportunity to map out how postmodernism acts to contest and problematize both the modernist trope of the students as a unitary subject, and my role in the research project as the researcher/writer. An exemplar of cultural criticism drawn from the disparate field of postmodern writing will further enable me to read across the diagrammatic Trinity outlined earlier. This will help map out some of the terrain of postmodern writing before returning to Flax.

The exemplar I have selected is Kwok Wei Long's playful deconstruction of body-building in "Muscle: Or how to impress with flesh and be a social theorist too" (1993, pp. 55-72). The author seeks "to make some speculative points about muscle and embodiment," arguing that the "body does not exist" except through the way that it is informed, enhanced, and shaped through the tissues of discourse. Consider the story of Sam, a body builder who realizes that he has become a "fabricated self" who has grounded his subjectivity in the convergence of the incongruent signifiers of "pecs" and "lats" that have become conflated with "success" and "prestige." Muscle has become power, fame and status. Sam reflects that "My greatest fear was that I didn't matter... I became a body builder as a means of becoming a caricature. The inflated cartoon I became relieved me from the responsibility of being human. But once I'd become that caricature, that inflated cartoon, I longed for something else" (p. 68). Framed within Foucault's sense of "writing on bodies" I read Sam's narrative as a description of pumping iron as pumping subjectivity. After spending months to bulk-up, Sam sees that he has embodied the Word and it was (he) Man. His body embodies text. "My body leapt out of me and laid bare out there in front, for me to observe, criticize, improve; through strict training my anatomy was monitored, controlled, disciplined, and enhanced."

For Lasch, body building might be read as a "fabrication" that ends up only as "vague and diffuse dissatisfaction coupled with heightened moments of self-esteem" (p. 62). In this sense, "body building signifies our subjectivity within a logic of consumption" (p. 69). It is Lasch who argues that in late modernism, with the decline of the family's ability to raise children with an integrated sense of right and wrong, we see the rise of a generation that seeks validation and integration in the fantasies of omnipotence and aggressive defenses against the loss of the

fragmented self. This is the culture of narcissism - the oscillation between self-aggrandizement and feelings of inner loss of a unitary subject. Lasch's work on the project to maintain a self is confronted by the threat of fragmentation that will be explored in Chapter Five. It is Wei Leng who challenges Lasch's deterministic framing of the body builder who is caught in the "narcissistic enclosure," rather than a subject who is encapsulated in a consumptive performance of body building. With Wei Leng I see Sam as someone who reminds us of our daily activities of resistance and displacement (I employ these terms from Butler, 1990, p140-141), displaying as he does, "a fleshy pun on our performing lives" (p. 68).

I read Sam's choice to embody the caricature of the body builder as an essential performance of parody on his part. It is the moment that he realizes the parody that invites an authorship that is agentic in the postmodern. By acknowledging the parodic performance, Sam confronts the limits of his subjectivity and goes forward to a new experience - to "never stop up the gap from within" (p. 69). I see here a subject struggling to *produce* and be *produced*. It is the capacity to build muscle that gives Sam the performative power to pun the body builder image that is simultaneously consumed and given back to. In the end Sam decides to not to continue and write a book instead. Sam, in the end, apprehends the very conditions of late capitalism that "produce" him (p. 69).

As a cultural practice, I read Wei Leng leading to the point raised by Butler about the subversive potential of parody (Butler, 190, pp. 79-141). In the postmodern there is a radical instability in category and representation, and as such, "truth claims contradict one another" (p. 137). While Butler is referring to drag appropriation of feminine 'appearances', I ask why can a skinny little 'geek' who lives on the margins not cross the boundaries that try, as Beauvoir phrased it, to shape "the styles of the flesh." My point is an ethical one - if a body is not a being (as Butler suggests, p. 139) but "a variable boundary," then Sam is a performing self who has the capacity to choose as one living in limits of this boundary.

So I draw back to postmodern allegory of the Stay Puffed Man. Is Sam a Stay Puffed Man too? Is he, like me, a subject caught up in the discursive possibilities that attempt to *produce him* as he *produces them?* I momentarily make Sam my apostrophe; I possess his story as I wonder about the tenuousness of the choices he made compared to mine: bulking up (me reading a lot/ getting smart?), doing the circuit training (doing the research), and displaying his ripped 'abs' at the beach (me defending my thesis). Will I, as the project unfolds, *Stay Puffed*? Or is the writing, the reading, the action research something that is written for me in the simulacrum of the academy, only to be transposed through me? As I review the literature these are the questions from the ontology of postmodernism that continually ask: "Which world is this?" (I employ this question from McHale, 1992, p. 151).

From Sam's story, Wei Leng draws important implications for feminism. Historically, the

body has been an important signifier of politics and repressive force in feminist writing. Yet the bodily experience of women within patriarchy had the effect of drawing feminist writing away from the subjectivity that women brought to the body because of it was seen as a "limitation," something that stood in-between women and freedom (p. 55). As "corpeal feminism" recognizes more recently, the body is seen as a site of subversive interruptions and displacements that can open possibilities for political action (Butler, 1990, p. 149). These possibilities will be explored in later chapters in the action research with students.

A Strategic Critique - Staying Sane (Puffed) in the Postmodern

So what of my wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth as I mire myself in the allegory of the Stay Puffed Man? As a metaphor for describing my complicit position between modernity and postmodernity, might I ask how Flax would offer some advice to both myself and the students in social studies in staying puffed (with sanity)? As a psychiatrist, Jane Flax, is someone who has constructed an important critique of postmodernism, particularly the work of Rorty, Lyotard, and Foucault. Her critique in *Thinking Fragments* (1990) is grounded on actual cases in her clinical practice of "borderline syndrome". It is her claim that this syndrome is evidence of the impossibility of living in "painful and disabling fragments" (I cannot resist deploying the trope here of "staying puffed.") These patients lack a core self and are unable to deal with the outer world in any functional way.

For postmodernists to attack any "continuity of being" is, in her words, "unimaginable". Flax flips the postmodernists on their heads and argues that their claims to "decenter" the self is nothing more than another form of grounding for a new core self (or a cohered sense of "who I am"). She reveals the tautology in postmodernism's claim against the "self" in this way: "Without a location and participation in collective memory and its retelling or reconstruction, a sense of 'we' cannot emerge or be sustained - a we of which each I is a part and to which each I is responsible" (p. 221). To stay puffed we need and have each other (through language for example).

In her review of postmodernism (pp. 209-221) Flax reviews the disparate postmodernist critiques of subjectivity and essentialist and universalist notions of human nature. Both Lyotard and Derrida situate the subject as a non-representational other who "wars on totality". From here emerges Foucault's sense as the self constructed as a "work of art". Lyotard attacked the subject and its attempt to "legitimate itself" as nothing more than that which attempts to grasp "reality" and thus guarantee its legitimacy. It was Lyotard who identified the two grand narratives of western society: the Enlightenment narrative and the narrative of spirit. Rorty constructs a subject who is tissued, woven with the analogues of persons who populate "innerspaces". For example Rorty critiques Freud's sense of *ego, id,* and *superego* as merely the conversation among

three partners (p. 217). Of course Flax takes Rorty to task on this and asks - so who/what is holding this conversation? What postmodernists denigrate is the possibility of a "deep subjectivity", one that allows for authentic aesthetic or mystical experiences that are "new and interesting". It is Flax's experience based on clinical practice, that the recovery of patients with "borderline syndrome" is possible and desirable within a rubric that refuses to abandon our agency as selves. Flax sees for women an opportunity to "re-member" their collective experience (in bodies that have been inscribed by political domination and patriarchal social relations).

Arguments against the "self" as posed by Foucault and others within postmodernism leave out the possibility of emerging consciousness that is located within a participating and fully remembering subject. Foucault argues for a new "selfhood' that creates and recreates itself "as a work of art" from the "bios as a material" that makes up our bodies. But, as Flax argues, such a call for human action leaves us "incomplete" (p. 218). Flax's work in clinical practice may be seen as experimental evidence that problematizes the naive and often simplistic claims that postmodernism makes about seeing human subjectivity as fragmented. Women (and others that have been marginalized) have every reason to be suspicious of arguments that seek to abandon "subjects as selves" just when they are beginning "to re-member their selves and to claim an agentic subjectivity" (p. 220). *The political territory of the female (sexed) body can only be understood within that territory* (my italics). Such a body is one that has been historically exploited and reviled, usurped and appropriated. This is what I take from Flax into the action research.

From Flax I read a political argument that the postmodernists have tended to skirt over the most important consequence of all - the fact that the spaces occupied by people are social ones *in bodies*. Cornell drives a similar point home in her compelling argument that for women, there lies an impossibile tensionality in living in otherness to "what is" but not knowing that *"what is" really is* (1991, p. 205-206). Cornell draws a bleak image of a woman trying to write or speak against her submergence: "The system in which a woman sinks into the shit, while a man crawls behind her unable to talk to her". So in a way, Cornell suggests of woman, "We have been sentenced. But even as sentenced one can still write differently" (p. 203). The undecidability that remains in feminism about affirming what the *feminine is* will be taken up in the closing of this chapter.

How then can postmodernists so easily denigrate the experiences of mother and child relations, and the importance of early childhood experiences that seem so resistant to societal change? Instead Flax argues for a sense of self that "is simultaneously embodied, gendered, social, and unique. It is capable of telling stories and of conceiving and experiencing itself in all these ways" (p. 232). This subject is the one that I seek in the action research (perhaps it is 'I'?) - one that is "capable of telling stories..." through the engagement with the Social Studies program in Grade 12. As outlined in Chapter One, to accomplish this will require a serious review of the discourse that has framed the narrative of the current Program of Studies. Flax, argues, the time

has come to expose the old Enlightenment stories (the metanarratives) (1992, p 450). She offers an epistemology that deploys postmodernism as an invitation "to engage us in a continual process of dis-illusionment with the grandiose fantasies that have brought us to the brink of annihilation" (p. 460). The feminist project has a beginning by interrogating the "oppressive effects" of power where it has its effects. This will be the focus of inquiring into the oppressive effects of the private/public division and the need to recover a place where women (and marginalized others) can speak.

The Public/Private Division: Refiguring Politics

I recall a story a female student once told me about walking down the hallway at lunch time while a group of male students sat on the floor staring at her as she walked by. A couple of them snickered, one remarked "she's a 4". Knowing, as she did that the number referred to a score out of 10, she walked away and cried. The *lack* (rating only a 4), constructed and circulated within the male gaze, became for the student her *lack*. I recall this story when I think of the efforts by curriculum developers and teachers as they 'cover the curriculum' to demarcate localized questions of human dignity as outside of social studies while others such as "language rights" and "legal rights" are inside social studies. As Wendy Brown suggests, "even when women acquire civil rights, they acquire something that is at best partially relevant to their daily rights and the main domain of her unfreedom" (1992, p. 17). When is the fact that girls in many high schools feel intimidated walking down a hallway ever addressed as a social studies issue? Or that access to contraceptives in a small rural town in this province is virtually non-existent compared to that of a larger center? These are the questions I raised in Chapter One. These are the questions Butler and Scott (1992, p. xiv) ask as well: "Who qualifies as a 'subject' of history, a 'claimant' before the law, a 'citizen'? Indeed, what qualifies as 'reality', 'experience' and 'agency,' 'the unified self,' the 'materiality of bodies,' the domain of 'ethics' and, indeed, of 'politics'. "

Linda Nicholson has reminded us that the study of politics is based on the premise that *rule of law* can be differentiated from relations within the family (Nicholson, 1986). This distinction has served in undermining the equality of women. Catherine Mackinnon attempts to illustrate how the private sphere, the family, is a site of repression for women (Mackinnon, 1987). In her reading of women's experience, sexual violation and exploitation are a large part of what constitutes the experience of woman - fulfilling another's desire and not one's own.

Who gets to decide *what is public and what is private* is probably as important as determining the effects of this distinction that has pervaded western political theory. In liberal democracy, the tradition has been to think of individual freedoms as the constitutive element that forms the social contract. It follows from this social contractarianism, that public authority only gets to do what private wills say it can. Historically, these private wills have been those of male citizens. An

illustration of this sensibility is the notion "a man's home is his castle." This, as Karen Struening suggests, represents not only patriarchy, but the the division between values of the marketplace (competition, exploitation) and values of the home (altruism and caring) (1992, p. 10).

It is tempting to engage the debate about differences in value orientations between men and women, to locate as Gilligan as tried, a woman's moral orientation that places an emphasis on care as opposed to justice (Gilligan, 1987, p. 20). Gilligan does not argue that a care-based perspective is essential to women, "caring" stands as a difference that women display by focusing not on universal principles of justice and fairness (in an abstracted sense as Kohlberg suggests in his schema of moral development), but on "preserving relationships" and maintaining a network for situationally "establishing or reestablishing and equitable balance in the distribution of rights or resources" (see Struening's reading of Gilligan in 1992, p. 200). But any debate such as this slides one into the danger of assigning styles or ways of being women that invariably must be constructed in opposition to older structures that patriarchy as given through language. To frame difference one needs to do so in relation to something, that something is invariably a construction of male constructed discourse. The choices given women are those given by men. I think here of a story told by a Bosnian women about being raped. Her attacker gave her a choice - "make a baby or have me come in your mouth". She lay silent. Nine months later she gave birth. (Reported on CBC Radio, "The World at Eight", June 1, 1993.)

As Flax (1990 a) suggests such attempts to symbolize women as "difference" stand in danger of reductionism that constricts and pushes aside possibilities for situating women in myriad complexes of social relations that are varied in their effects of power and domination. In short, "unless we see gender as a social relation rather than as an opposition of inherently different beings, we will not be able to identify the varieties and limitations of different women's (or men's) powers and oppressions within particular societies" (pp. 54-55). Flax maps out a fourfold strategy that allows an examination of the private/public dichotomy with a clear political agenda - to examine the effects of power within social relations that do not essentialize or naturalize difference, but position women (and men) as neither innocents or villains. Flax calls for feminist theories, as with other forms of postmodernism, to "encourage us to tolerate and interpret ambivalence, ambiguity, and multiplicity" (p. 56).

Karen Struening (1991) traces the evolution of the public/private division through the writings of Aristotle and Rousseau. I will briefly review her work in an attempt to illustrate the limited assumptions embedded in the current curriculum as it serves to reproduce and circulate the effects of power articulated through the private public/dichotomy. The implication for me here is that teachers need to be aware that women's exclusion from the public sphere has been achieved through identifying and conflating relationships within the household as tied to gendered difference between men and women.

For Aristotle, the *polis* (the community as whole) is superior to the *oikos* (the household). The polis aims for the sovereign good of the whole while the oikos aims at the "partial and limited goods" of the home (p. 40). The polis has a wide a range of complex functions to perform with a variety of different men who "serve as complements to one another" (Aristotle (*Politics*) cited in Struening, p. 40). The oikos, by contrast, consists of individuals (women, children, slaves) who are "rationally deficient" (p. 62) in varying degrees. There are differences in the hierarchy of the household, the slave occupying the lowest level followed by children and the wife. A woman's husband in Aristotle's reading, stands almost equal. Yet, because women possess *deliberative powers* "in a form that remain inconclusive" (Aristotle *Politics*, cited p. 60), the household remains an autocratic form of organization (p. 72). These *deliberative powers* are for Aristotle, the capacities for moral acts and reasoned speech that are required in the complex organization of the *polis*.

According to Rousseau, "There is quite a difference between arrogating to oneself the right to command and governing him who commands. Women's empire is an empire of gentleness, skill, and obligingness; her orders are caresses, her threats are tears" (Rousseau cited p. 161). The public realm is one of autonomous and free men who are able to attend to the needs of the republic by virtue of the fact that they have stable and nurturing families. Rousseau, by placing so much emphasis and concern on the importance of the nurturing family as the foundation for the stability of the state, positions women as the guardians and caregivers of the father's children; mother "serves as the link between them and their fathers, she alone makes him love them and gives him the confidence to call them his own" (Rousseau, cited, p. 361).

As Struening suggests, Rousseau should be "considered a pivotal figure in the creation of the opposite sex" (p. 100). For Aristotle there was a hierarchy of quality associated with men and women; for Rousseau, there is not a vertical difference, but a horizontal one, in terms of capacities or talents. In Rousseau's mind women are equal to men but assigned different duties by nature (p. 103). Essential to this difference is women's capacity to nurture children, to "mold passions that will lead to the foundation of the General Will" (pp. 116-117).

Rousseau's arguments for excluding women from the public sphere are more subtle than Aristotle's to unravel since Rousseau sees difference as essential to the continuance of modern western society. Without the work of women in the home to tame the passions of men (who are less capable than women in controlling and understanding their passions), the General Will would not be possible to achieve. The difference that Rousseau figures between men and women acts as a positive construction in the modern state.

With the changes in how women are figured in contemporary discourse on equality and difference, now the questions can be raised, as Struening does, about the possibility of refiguring the private/public split. Should the family be a site of greater democratic principles grounded on the belief in equality? Should the private be made to look more public? One response would be to

take Aristotle's moral acts and reasoned speech into the family (p. 194).

Yet as Elshtain indicates, applying public sphere principles to private sphere life endangers agreements between people (discussed in Struening, p. 195). For example, Elshtain asks us to consider marriage as a *compact* that goes beyond the instrumentalism of a *contract*. Struening rejects Elshtain's argument on the basis that there is nothing pernicious in extending free speech and equality into the project of finding out what a marriage (or any private agreement) is all about (p. 197). I take up Struening's claim that " if we are to realize the goal of the sexual equality in public life and private life, we must add dimensions to private life that both Aristotle and Rousseau ignored" (p. 197).

It is also true that the entry of women into the public sphere remains an issue stilled mired in debate. The movement of women into the state presents complex issues that Struening does not address. Some of these are highlighted by Somer Brodribb who calls for women to continually pose questions and speak of "our differences" in a politics that should vigorously seek resistance (1989, pp. 188-199). Yet Struening is correct in implying that women have no choice - "Not to participate is to imbue an open-ended process with the objectivity of nature. Autonomy is intrinsically linked to politics and the public sphere because acting politically is to see oneself as intervening in history rather than accepting fate" (p. 207). So what Struening has done is to map out a history, a narrative, of how the split between private/public has created strangers of men and women in many ways. New political forms and associations "have the potential to bring strangers together" (p. 207). While this might be read as a project that seeks to erase difference, I read it as an attempt that should seek equality and community that assumes difference.

Struening claims that "Politics is the activity of speech among citizens that creates a common way of life" (p. 207). I choose to read her "common way" as one that takes apart and refigures differences based on gender (public/private), that allow previously intractable distinctions (male/female) to be interrupted and refigured. Hutcheon frames this project as one that involves in the postmodern condition, using feminism as a strategy to begin this work of challenging the "universal called Man" and that has naturalized the "separation between the private and public, the personal and the political" (Hutcheon, 1989, p. 167).

In moving into the public realm, feminist writers have been careful not to position man or the state as a unitary object that acts deliberately to dominate women. As Brown reminds us, the "state can be masculinist without intentionally or overtly pursuing the interests of men precisely because of the multiple dimensions of socially constructed masculinity that have historically shaped the multiple modes of power circulating through the domain called the state" (Brown, 1992, p. 14). Brown frames the multiple and diverse and often "unsystematic" composition of male domination as a "homology" (p. 14). There is a strong scent of Foucault in Brown's argument - that power is diffused through a diversity of men as they are located as fathers,

entrepreneurs, workers, union leaders (and graduate students?). Importantly, Brown reminds us, that the same diversity and diffuseness is evident across women's experience: as mothers, prostitutes, scholars and fashion models. So in this sense of a "homology", I read male power for Brown as something that can be invested in many ways - even through women dominating other women. The homology construct allows me to read power regimes as Linda Singer does, as circulated through erasures and exclusions, through recirculations and productions. Homology illustrates how women can be subordinated in certain positions (in government, the economy) and recirculated in other sites (prostitution, *Playboy* magazine) (Singer, 1992, p. 42). Drawing from Baudrillard, Singer reminds us that power is only able to sustain itself if it can "refract" itself in variations that allow it to be doubled and redoubled. Thus "over-investment in sexuality" in late capitalism (p. 69) has rendered many women (and men) linked to the phallus as "the primary commodity fetish" (p. 61). Singer's notion of refraction reminds me of the Lacanian sense that real power as it is circulated in the culture of everyday life, tries not to make too much noise.

It is these complexities and ambivalences about treating men as exploiters and women as victims that I wish to explore in the following. What I am looking for is a story that resists treating action research as a liberating project for woman. Using Brown's sense of homology, I want to problematize the notion of subjects (woman) as they are read in the project. I read Brown to suggest that in the postmodern, "as sites and registers of women's relationships to the state expand" male dominance will "transmogrify" (p. 28). The question of the private/public split will slide away as late capitalism and the state "configures, administers, and produces" private needs: further challenging efforts by women to produce /resist as they are produced/resisted. *Private Woman (and Man)*, becomes increasingly problematic as a discursive construct.

Contingency in *Woman* as a Category

The difficulty in categories such as *woman (man, sexuality)*, is that they develop as sedimented experiences through time, given to us through language. These "sediments" often appear as uniform and unproblematic. An anology is that of looking at the ground; from above it appears one way. Moving to a site of erosion or excavation, and examined from the side (recovered through a genealogy of the category), the meaning of the category appears open for contestation. What I wish to explore is Scott's work on deconstructing "difference" and how this has implications for feminist writing that attempts to represent *woman* (Scott, 1988, p.p. 33-50). Scott explains the poststructuralist sense of 'difference' as a expression of contrast and in terms of our inability to positively define anything except in relation to the negation or "repression of something." This is reflected in Derrida's critique of western philosophy and the binary oppositions that it generates. Each of these binaries has a dominant and subordinate function that serve to give the *other* identity (e.g. identity/difference, male/female).

As I read Scott, I see deconstruction serving to reveal how sedimented "meanings are made to work." Deconstruction demonstrates how binaries are "constructed oppositions" that frame and delimit communication and the construction of selves in discursive practice. An example of this is the "equality vs. difference" debate. Living in the difference metaphor compels us to consider 'deviance' as an element of difference (thereby inviting discussion of 'normalcy'), and so on it continues. Using a medical metaphor, binaries are the herpes of language - they just keep reproducing themselves through contact with human subjects. In the Sears case the difference dilemma is illustrated when the courts rule in favour of a socially constructed sense of "natural difference" that legitimates social inequality. Scott attempts a deconstruction of *equality* in order to demonstrate the impossibility of defending women's demands for justice in the defence's argument that structured *woman* as less interested in commission sales jobs (p. 39), because of long standing historical and cultural differences between men and women.

Equality, Scott argues, should be seen as "equivalency between different people" (p. 44). What Scott is arguing here, is that equality has the notion of difference subsumed within it. The Sears' decision conflated specific differences between males and females (e.g. on performance in commissioned sales) with "bodily differences". Sears successfully excluded consideration of differences among women (e.g. that some might choose less risk-taking jobs). According to Scott, the defence failed to "capture the specificity of female diversity and women's experience." It is Scott's claim that gender difference needs to be carefully scrutinized as a construction. The categories "*woman* and *man* are highly contingent" (p. 47) and dependent on political and social factors. It is a mistake to reify "women's needs" or "women's rights" since these are situationally and historically constructed categories. What is required is a two-fold strategy: one that interrogates "categorical difference", and another that rests on a sense of "equality of difference".

A number of points raised by Scott are relevant to a reading of *Women's Caring* (Baines *et al*, 1991). This book explores what caring has meant to women - how this sense is varied and reformulated through time and location. The book stresses the importance of seeing women's involvement in caring not as determined by biology or nature, but as shaped and constructed by processes of "socialization through which sex is translated into gender". This is basically a constructivistic view of women's role in society. Importantly, it refutes the notion that women can be thought of in some homogenous sense. As Scott cautions, so too the book points out that the "experience of women" in society is a varied one that problematizes the simplistic model of "female as victim of male domination." For example, the book points out that recent tax reform has been kind to upper income women in Canada who profit from a tax system that gives them credits for paying for child care, but provides no tax credits to lower income mothers who stay at home. The book claims that these women systematically exploit the tax laws that institutionalize the poverty of lower income women who work in low paying jobs (like day care), or who are not

eligible for tax credits if they decide to stay home with their infants (p. 90).

Another example is the resistance that girls are increasingly demonstrating in Canada to male domination and institutionalized violence. This resistance takes on a variety of forms: fighting over boyfriends, defensive solidarity in bedroom subcultures, delinquency, lesbianism, and 'unfeminine behaviors' that are only now being researched and uncovered (p. 131). *Girls are not taking it anymore, and the ways they are resisting defies easy categorization.*

"Riot Grrrl," an underground feminist movement founded in 1991 in the U.S. is one current example (reported in *Seventeen* magazine, May, 1993, pp. 80-83). Their fanzines include *Wiglet, Quit Whining,* and *Girl Germs,* with articles such as "I am a feminist and so is my Dad." Defying easy categorization, the movement draws on a broad range of girls from diverse backgrounds. In-fighting among different chapters of the organization has caused serious rifts in the organization. These ruptures problematize the female/male antinomy since within these sites of resistance we see female vs. female, male vs. female and so on. More importantly, the symbolic representations of resistance often appropriate codes from patriarchal and phallic culture: fishnet stockings and army boots are a trademark of some members. As de Certeau (1984) might suggest, these are the tactics of the nomad that are avaliable to those in a subordinate position: to move across places without one of their own. For de Certeau there would be in Riot Grrrl no real possibility to construct their own places or to act as agents who can reinscribe power relations. Yet Riot Grrrls represent in my reading, the polyvocality of women speaking. It is true as Spivak (1988) might note of the subaltern speaking: that the exclusion of such a possibility is actively reproduced until the mechanicisms and practices that circulate such exclusions are removed. Riot Grrrls are tactically having the effect of removing some of these exclusions.

I read Riot Grrrls like so many individuals caught as subjects who fabricate and manipulate signifiers, as 'lost' in a forest choosing the path through a the thick forest undergrowth of possibility. There is little to use as a guide, but the alternative is to sit and wait until you are found. But no one ever looks for the subaltern. Or maybe these girls do not wish to be found. So here the girls move out: we have fishnet stockings and army boots as artifacts of culture reconstituted through interruption of locating them on one body - a female body.

One reading of *Riot Grrrl* as resistance might cross-read Virilio (1977) with Lacan and de Certeau. I read these girls creating what Virilio might call little "war machines" against the dromocratic state; using their vaginas (holes) to intercept and castrate male power. (In the Gulf war Hussein hid his fighters in underground bunkers (holes) - only to be used another day.) Such is the tactics of nomad within in the "dromocratic state." In the compression of speed and time of the dromocratic state there is, as de Certeau has suggested of the nomad, opportunity only for tactics not strategies. Yet I argue that these tactics, repeated and circulated over time have the effect of creating a place, a formation of new possibilities. Lenin understood that,

"quantity is a quality of its own." Riot Grrrl stands as one point of articulation of women as potential agents that defies a consistent interpretation in feminist writing. Yet it does stand (from my reading of Cornell) as people refusing to be "buried in shit."

A last point from from *Women's Caring* demonstrates how disparate and highly fractal the signifier of *women's experience* has become. What we see now in the social work profession, is women professionalized by the social work discourse (an expression of phallic power), infiltrating and penetrating the home-life of lower income women who rely on the state for social assistance. As the book demonstrates, these women are preyed upon by a professional class (of women) that frames them as "neglectful" without any regard for the factors that contribute to the less than 'ideal' care they provide for their children(p. 249). For example, Baines argues, very little research has been done on "neglect" from the perspective of the women involved - little is done to alleviate the social and economic factors that contribute to neglect. As the state's resources shrink in the face of recession, the intervention of professional social workers (usually female) is one of *policing care*, determining what it means to be *a mother*. So while a public relations campaign rages about the ravages of child abuse, nothing is said about the women whose lives are framed solely as 'neglectful mothers', (and the media remains silent about the effects of cut-backs and the recession on these women.) The irony that overarches all of this is the professional 'mothering' social worker (who works nine to five on her case load). In the eyes of a single mother on a low income, perhaps there would be Lacanian justice in calling her what she is - the unsignified phallus that wears a chic business suit and visits under the guise of a 'helping professional'. . . the "mother-fucker." Further, I read with interest a magazine for professional women, *Lear's* (June 1993). A cover story features the problem with women gaining access to some of the more prestigious golf clubs in the U.S. The cover reads: "The Golf War - Women Fight for Equal Tee Time." In the postmodern, to talk of the subject *woman* is problematic.

Problematizing educational research on Gender

Given what I have outlined earlier, the question of 'how to do research?' is one that needs to be considered in light of the problem of not knowing if there is indeed a subject: *women*. What I wish to offer is a framework of educational research on gender that allows me to position modernist 'empirical' work against an action research project that reflects a postmodern sensibility. In this way, the ethical and methodological position of action research in education I have mapped out in Chapter One will be clearer.

The framework I offer is that of McIntosh (cited in Osborne, 1991, p. 70). She maps out five phases of a curriculum development which may be interpreted as ways of positioning gender research in terms of how it attempts to frame the inclusion and definition of *woman*.

> Stage One. *The absence of women:* where women are simply excluded, allowing men to position themselves as dominant.
>
> Stage Two. *The inclusion of women:* where untypical examples or token representations of women occur.
>
> Stage Three: *Women as a problem:* where gaps and biases are recognized and an awareness exists that something called woman needs inclusion.
>
> Stage Four: *Women as subject matter:* where women are recovered (excavated) often through the use of unconventional methods such as crossing disciplinary boundaries, using non-traditional sources of text. In this phase students share their experiences and help add 'their pile' to the curriculum stack.
>
> Stage Five: *Subject matter redefined and reconstructed:* where new ground is broken (at a local level) that draws on both men's and women's ways of seeing the world. This would be in Osborne's words, "a circular, multi-cultural, inculsive curriculum which socializes people to be whole, balanced, and undamaged, which includes rather than excluding most parts of life, and which fosters a pluralistic understanding and fulfils the dream of a common language" (adapted from Osborne, 1991 and McIntosh, 1983).

Despite the obvious problems of dreaming for a "common language" in Stage Five, this scheme is momentarily a useful one. In stages 1 to 3, women are, at worst ignored and at best, probed. Embedded in this model is a sense (naive perhaps) that as stages 4 and 5 are reached, students become the source of the questions and solutions. These 'stages' are of course not fixed boundaries. Generally, they can be read as broad transitions that are made in the shifting sands of curriculum planning and pedagogical practice. Currently, I read the Alberta Social Studies curriculum to be largely in Stage 2. I make this comment based both on a review of the recommended resources and the construction of the political and economic discourse that is embedded in the Program of Studies. Slowly an awareness is developing that changes have to be made and movement toward the third stage is taking place. I refer to the recent problematic effort of Alberta Education to survey attitudes towards "human rights and the self" in Alberta (Alberta Education, 1993)). A survey such as this, frames questions within a liberal democratic discourse of "human rights" and "attitudes towards self". As the feminist/postmodernist conversation implies, such an approach is problematic: it assumes a limited definition of human rights (see a discussion of this in Chapter One and Three), and sees the student as a unitary subject who can be probed and who is to be 'educated' through improvements (tinkering?) made to a variety of course such as social studies, Career and Life Management, the sciences, and mathematics, by modifying "general and specific learner expectations" (p. 68).

In what follows I wish to explore an exemplar of research that is situated in the third stage. It represents the state modernist research in education that I find problematic. By engaging this research in a conversation with the feminist/postmodern literature presented earlier, I hope to provide a sense for the limitations of modernist, so-called "empirical" research. The goal will be to tease out the possibilities for research that represents an engagement with the students that

blurs the delineation between subject and researcher, between figure and ground.

The research I am engaging explores an area relevant to the action research being undertaken in the following chapters. The research study examines orientations towards conflict resolution and strategies used by males and females to resolve conflicts (Haverkamp, 1991-92, pp. 227 - 240). Relationships, particularly friendships, represent an important source of understanding about how human beings go about constructing themselves and their world. Close relationships were understood in this study to be influenced by such variables as: the degree of commitment to the relationship, self-monitoring orientations, perceptions of conflict, and the overall perceived quality of the relationship. The focus of the study was to examine the gendered nature of commitments to relationships, the degree that gender influenced reported conflict management strategies, and the degree to which gender influenced self-monitoring strategies. The study was done in the context of relationships that were reported to be "stable" (18-24 months), "happy" and "intimate" (p. 231). Participants were asked to respond to questionnaires in terms of a relationship with "someone with whom you feel close."

Central to this study was the identification of two orientations to interaction: high-self monitoring and low self-monitoring. High self-monitoring is typical of individuals whose behavior is determined by situational variables such as the physical appearance of others, the level of commitment felt to the immediate circumstances of the relationship, and a definition of friendship that is "activity" or situationally based. Low self-monitors on the other hand, exhibit behavior that is internally guided by deep commitments, and see friends as being "like themselves." Low self-monitors project psychological attributes onto their friends and will deal with them in terms of these ascribed attributes (for example paying attention to their needs and wants - the affect). The study found males to score much higher on self-monitoring scales compared to females. (65% of males were found to be high on this scale with high males outnumbering low males 2:1. 45% of females were found to be high self-monitors but the ratio of high to low females was almost equal.) As the study concluded, a significant number of females reported behaviors as high self-monitors, which the conventional literature ascribes as "masculine" in character (p. 238). Yet from the other variables examined in the study, it is clear that strong female tendencies towards mutually negotiated resolutions and emotional engagement (found in other scales) suggests that females may overly 'self-report' their self-monitoring scales. The study suggests that this possibility be more closely examined in later research.

In conjunction with the Self-Monitoring Scale three others were completed and analyzed: a scale assessing the quality of a relationship, a measure of conflict perceptions in that relationship, and a Conflict Resolution Scale. Males were found to be less committed to their relationships and felt these were less intimate than the relationships reported on by females.

This was consistent with what previous researchers reported (p. 236). The reported level of intimacy for males did not vary with the gender of their friend. The study speculates that this might support the conclusion that males tend to view relationships situationally; "different friends for different reasons. " (Since the study did not ask respondents to specify whether their relationship was platonic or sexual, it remains to be determined whether or not this tentative conclusion is valid. Obviously further cross-validation needs to be done.) Overall then, the study found females to find friendships to be more intimate and stable, and to be more willing to avoid denial and avoidance strategies (e.g. "asking a friend outright what s/he wants"). Males tend to orient themselves towards maintaining "face" and minimizing "personal relevance" by denying the importance of the conflict or avoiding discussion of the issues surrounding the conflict. The following will explore both the limitations and the implications of the study's conclusions.

This study situates itself in the discourse that concerns itself with gender difference. In doing so it is of fundamental importance to education. As Heidi Ross reminds us, gender studies have tended to be considered "peripheral" because they have, in the eyes of some scholars, "failed to meet rigorous standards of scholarship" (Ross, 1992, p. 353). Careful scrutiny of empirical studies such as this one require us to peel away the layers of that complex construction we call "gender"; to uncover what it means and how it functions in the "sociopolitical contexts" of our schools and society *(Ibid.)*. As Patti Lather reminds us, these are "days of disenchantment, of questions that cut to the bone about what it means to do empirical work in the human sciences" (Lather, 1991 b, p. 102). Interpreting 'gender' as a research interest remains problematic. Perhaps Flax cuts through the lines of debate most cogently when she sidesteps the maze of conflicting discourses that attempt to arrogate 'gender' as a research direction, by reminding us that: "Gender systems are ... an important aspect of the context within and by which the self is constituted. Thus gender systems should be of interest to all those who study issues of selfhood, subjectivity, and knowledge" (1990 b, p. 138). If pedagogical relations are to be examined as a stubbornly complex and "heterogeneous reality", as Lather calls it, then certainly understanding the way gender inserts itself into the way we construct ourselves is worthwhile (1991 b, p. 124).

Studies such as this one, should not be used to achieve a sense of gender differences that attempt to fix identity. What I am leading to here is a sense of gender not within a binary opposition or some essentialist biological reductionism. Gender is best seen as a "metaphor" that describes social relations, a culturally constructed category of thought, that is part of how we understand how individuals construct themselves (Flax, 1990 b, p. 25). This is what Patti Lather meant when she suggested that we think of "woman" in a metaphorical sense as well, as "a site of power" where the dominant discourses can be challenged and interrogated (Lather, 1991 b, p. 39).

Understanding this study's conclusions about power and gendered differences in conflict orientations is important in the context of the postmodern discourse on gender. The study

points out that there is a strong female orientation to mediate conflict by "emphasizing personal relevance, emotional engagement, and mutually negotiated conflict resolution" (Haferkamp, 238). By focusing on the 'cognitive schema' (tropes?) that are actively produced and circulated by respondents, one might see gender difference as something that is developed by body/subjects within a social setting of symbolic production. For example, self-monitoring can be seen as a discursive practice among males that helps men construct and reproduce their pragmatic and carefully measured approach to relationships. Perhaps the significance of this finding lies in Di Stefano's claim that liberal democracy is infused by the radical individualism of Hobbes. This involves - "a repudiation of relatedness with others and of a natural contingency threatening to the self; an obsession with autonomy" (Di Stefano, 1983). Is male reluctance to "love" a friend, as reported by the study, a product of this individualism that has spilled over to *private relations?*

Before this or any other conclusions can be made however, the deeper meanings ascribed by the respondents to the questionnaires must be interrogated. As mentioned in the study, like all questionnaires, there are difficulties unpacking differing interpretations of meanings. What does it mean for a male respondent "to work together", "to have a discussion", or to be "annoyed"? Hal Witteman recently gives an example of how quantitative studies (despite being written in the language of modernism) can be enriched by more systematically interpreting communication as a speech act that is rich in nuance and subtlety. For example, he introduces the Getzels model that demonstrates how human beings constantly "present, discover, and create" meanings in their interactions (Witteman, 1992). This triad would have helped Haferkamp derive more meaning from the self-reported behaviors of the respondents. For example, just how differently might respondents interpret a question that asks them to identify the degree to which they felt they "controlled" a friend's behavior, or how they defined "stability" in a relationship? Questions such as these would push Haferkamp's work from the third into the fourth and fifth stages in the rubric delineated from McIntosh earlier.

What Haferkamp fails to do, mired in a sense of research subjects as 'puzzles to solve', is to define the meanings respondents brought to the questions. The Witteman study, mentioned earlier, peeled away the cognitive underpinnings (meta-structures?) that constitute communication. What are the deeper structures that are being produced and circulated and refracted through to the surface? It is these structures that work such as Haferkamp's will not get at. We need to explore constructed/embedded meanings that reflect *symbols* (language), not simply report *the symbols.* It may be true that males tend to be far less committed to relationships, and that they minimize the importance of the conflicts they are engaged in, resorting instead to pragmatic strategies such as ignoring differences between themselves and their friends, or simply leaving the relationship. It would be useful for Haferkamp to explore the underlying economic and political reasons for these male orientations that are ignored by the

questionnaires used in the study. Recalling her own conclusion that men are highly situational and pragmatic in their relationships, Haferkamp might examine the underlying motivations for this more explicitly. What long term gains do men see in such orientations? What are values held by men, outside of the language of relationships, that would reveal a more integrated sense of the respondents as human beings constructing their meanings? Heidi Hartmann sees men's control over women in relationships, for example, as deeply rooted in a "disconnectedness" to people in general (Hartmann, 1979). There is an irony here as well in the study's finding that men are much less reluctant than women to claim that they have an influence on their partner's behavior (p. 236). As the study suggests, men attempt to portray their behavior in conflicts as "detached", "cool"; or "in control" of their emotions, but very importantly, not those of their partner's. But this may not be as surprising as one might think. As Lacanians remind us, the power of the phallus is greatest when it is hidden, when it remains unseen in everyday speech and living. By naming their patriarchal (or phallic power) as "detachment" men are able to play the role of the observer looking in or at the object/subject to be controlled. In a more dramatic sense, is men's ability to rape a reflection of a deeply embedded antinomy that sees their physical ability to rape (penetrate the vagina) masked by their language of "detachment" and feeling "uninfluential" in relationships? Without taking this argument to the biological determinism of Brownmiller, (cited in Coole, 1988, p. 262) one can see merit in exploring what the Lacanians might make of this study's interesting conclusions. Rather than claiming that the ability to rape "is the biological basis of patriarchy" , as Brownmiller claims; a poststructuralist interpretation of the Haferkamp study allows us to situate human subjects where they belong - as "bearers" of "ideas, symbol and forms of consciousness" (Flax, 1990, p. 181).

In terms of the study's overall technical merit for an inquiry into gender, a number of minor issues need to be flagged. As Haferkamp recognizes, the sample represents some limitations. She concedes the fact that her sample of 140 university students (all registered in a course on interviewing techniques) might have skewed some results. Her claim that these shifts would not be significant statistically , lies rather unsupported (p. 237). Haferkamp also attempts to minimize the impact of the obvious racially homogenous sample (88.5% Caucasians, 7.9% Hispanics, 2.9% Asian Americans, .7% Blacks). According to the 1990 U.S. Census, Blacks represented 12% of the population. Haferkamp attempts to minimize the lack of racial representativeness of her sample by citing only one study that indicates that race is not a important variable in shaping conflict strategies (p. 228). Such an effort to minimize Otherness is not convincing. To minimize race as an influence in the shaping of self within the community is indicative of patriarchal scholarship that emphasizes individual autonomy over the power of the extended definitions of "self" that is constructed within groups. This tendency, according to Robinson, acts to alienate the constructed "subject/self" in the literature (cited in Gilligan *et al*

1991, p 92.). Certainly these objections about the lack of attention to differences need to be considered in conjunction with the fact that the socio-economic profile of the respondents was middle class and upwardly mobile (p. 239). Erasure and occlusion of difference is typical of work in the third stage of McIntosh's rubric.

Quantitative studies such as Haferkamp's, embued with the certainties of modernism, serve a needed function in providing insight into the production of meaning as selves. It is also appropriate for Haferkamp to remind us at the conclusion of her paper that "it can be argued that the most well learned and fundamental of all our social self-presentations may be our gender roles." Certainly her work helps in understanding this. Yet her work does not present solutions, it only raises the questions of what I call *the difference that can be tolerated.* This tolerance is inscribed by the positivistic trope of quantitative research that positions questions to be asked of subjects who are signified as *man* and *woman.* Such signification occludes differences among subjects and between groups to such a degree that I am left with many questions. Does this research really tell me about students in terms of their cultural practices and their effects? What are the textures that form the representations and meanings, the pains and pleasures brought into the experience of conflict and relationships? Can anything found in this study act as a marker for pedagogical practice? Where are the people in this research? Why do they seem invisible? Are these the questions Van Maanen implies when he invokes W.H. Auden? "Thou shalt not sit with statisticians, nor commit a social science" (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 13).

Carving (or Craving?) *Woman* In Educational Research

Sometimes in reading feminist literature I thought it might be easier completing this work if I were a woman. Indeed, I have often been met with strange looks when I have explained my interest in feminist writing to my colleagues (both male and female). In being a woman, I thought maybe the writing would seem less abstract, less removed from my own expereince. Indeed, writers such as Seidler claim that men need serious therapy to do the kind of work I am undertaking (1990, p. 262). But the more I explore the intersection of postmodernism and feminism, the more I came to sense Butler's poststructuralist warning about the danger of language swallowing everything. The "experience" of being *woman* is one I have no direct contact with except from the vantage point Cornell describes for men who are reduced to "crawling around the pit" watching women getting buried "in shit". Perhaps the only experience I can have watching women getting buried "in shit" is that of my own complicity and guilt. So I read Butler's claim that there is no correct "natural" conception of the *masculine* and the *feminine*; that such conceptions need to reconsidered and destabilized (Bultler, 1990, pp. 138-139). Yet given what the literature and my experience has suggested about the predicaments many women find themselves in (both in and out of school), my commitment to improve my teaching powers me to

carve out a space where something intelligible called "woman" can be articulated. Yet, I, like so many feminist writers, might crave for *woman*, needing to find an essential "thing-in-itself" that can be assigned to women. Despite Butler's attempt to erase the possibility of foundational "essence" by supplanting it with discourse, I remain ambivalent about trying to solve this particular puzzle.

Teresa de Lauretis (1990) attempts to unlock the polarities in the essentialist/anti-essentialist debate by developing a larger context for feminist theory that includes more than gender oppression and debates about women's nature. Feminism, she argues, cannot escape its difference from other discourse because, by definition, it involves the interesection of embodied, situated knowledge, "en-gendered" thinking with disciplines such as psychoanalysis, structuralism and film theory (1990, p. 263). As a "theoretical condition of possibility" feminism cannot escape the necessary tension that pits the exotic narcissistic drives (difference, daring, excess) and ethical drives (community, sisterhood, bonding) together into a "house of difference" (p. 266).

There is here for feminism a recognition of the strength produced by its delimitations. De Lauretis' sense of the grounding of feminism on socially situated subject position as a strength for feminism, is captured by Patricia Williams in her commentary on gender, race, and rights in the United States (1990). As a Black woman who rose to the highest levels of the legal-academic community in the United States, she brings a sense of this strength in her writing.

> I have been focussing on the semantic power and property of individualistic gendered perspectives, gender in this instance having less to do with biology of male and female than with the semiotics of power relations, of domination and submission, of assertion and difference, of big and little; as well on gender issues specifically based on biology, such as reproductive rights and the complicated ability of women in particular to live freely in the territory of their own bodies (p. 12).

In Williams I sense the *necessary entrapment* (my italics) feminism is caught in - the body is where feminism springs, but as a text the body can be read in ways that give simultaneously different answers to the same questions. The nature of *woman* remains as elusive as ever (as does that of *man*). Yet what the intersection of feminism and postmodernism allows is the sense that the possibility of an essential difference is a necesssary one that needs to be constantly deconstructed. In this way we might see this affirmation of difference as the playing out of an allegory that as Cornell indicates, is "a new choreography" where the performance "is affirmed as performance, not as a mere description of what woman is" (1991, p. 205). As Cornell suggests, we may not be sure of the possibilities inhered in this new choreography, but we need to protect its possibility. Recalling the diverse academic perspectives brought to feminism, the popular cultural examples of the Riot Grrrl movement and the women engaged in the "Golf War", the *struggle of woman* remains a signifier that resists being written. This is a caution taken into the action

research project.

I wish to close this review of the literature by questionning my project of trying to write *woman*. The normalization and erasure of subjects and researchers is the strategy exemplified in research such as Haferkamp's. This is the illusion of detachment that mainstream (read "stage three") research permits. Yet this is a strategy that ignores "passions, politics, and power" as Michelle Fine suggests (Fine, 1992, p. 209). Citing Haraway, we are reminded here of this approach as a "God trick... that mode of seeing that pretends to offer a vision that is from everywhere and nowhere, equally and fully" (cited p. 208). The presumption of "neutrality" and "objectivity" that collects data on subjects and then publishes the results and walks away serves to further "laminate deeply conservative interests" (p. 209), preserving the intellectual interests of the academy conveniently detaching the subjects as objects - atoms vibrating in a field that the "detached" observer claims to understand but does little to influence.

Michelle Fine sees feminist researchers positioned in three ways: ventriloquy, voices, and activism (p. 212). Ventriloquy draws upon Haraway's God trick - the strategy in work such as Haferkamp's (of detachment and neutrality) asks statistics to speak for *woman*. In the second approach, (voices), one sees researchers collecting the stories of dropouts, teen parents, and others on the margins. There is a seductiveness in treating these voices as "innocent words of critique" without problematizing them. Fine reviews Foucault's caution that all voices have vested in them power relations (p. 219). What is subtle about this approach is that the researcher often hides behind the voices of subjects and interprets and contextualizes stories to achieve a "delicate tailoring of texts" (p. 218). Such "tailoring" is not the problem, it is concealing how we do it that distorts the stories about the Other.

The third stance is activist feminist research. In such research, the political position of the researcher is acknowledged and problematized, the researcher is seen as a participant and a subject simultaneously. The reason for this acknowledgment of the researcher's involvement is simple: the researcher is committed to "the study of change, the move toward change, and/or is provocative of change" (p. 220). Activist feminist research is represented by "Action research projects (that) seek to unearth, interrupt, and open new frames for intellectual and political theory and change" (p. 220). Framed in this way, the action research project traced through in the following chapters seeks to address the need for a curriculum change. It does this through a description of the work that shows the writer and written recursively engaged. It is a research that is constructing meanings as it proceeds. In a small way, it seeks to approach research as Lather suggests, that enfolds on itself, contesting and displacing its own efforts to make meaning (1991 a). This echoes here McHale's sense of "constructing *a* postmodernism" (1992, p. 26) that exhausts and replenishes itself by keeping me in-between what Fine called the "hyphens" of subject positions (1992, p. 229). From my often conflictual subject positions as a graduate student

and a privileged middle-aged male imbued with the literature of feminism/postmodernism who seeks to be a better teacher, I submit ambivalently, "how can I construct anything different?" In the end, and the beginning, I acknowledge that it is by moving across these "hyphens" that I am motivated and replenished. So the work in the classroom begins.

CHAPTER 3
"GETTING INTO THIS PLACE"

Entering the Daily Life of Students

The first phase of work with the students was to explore how we, as teachers and students, read issues raised by feminism. Gender issues and discussion of patriarchal structures that are embedded in our social relations would form much of the backdrop for our introductory week. The films and discussions were to contribute to an analysis of our divergent positions as teachers and students. My intent here was to invite contestation about the language and discourse of the academic research question and how it might power our relationship over the course of our three weeks together. Central to action research is a need for reflexive problematizing of the various subject positions of researchers (Kemmis and McTaggart 1990, p.57).

My position as a researcher from the university, Rod's interest in exploring gender issues in his social studies teaching, and the variety of students in the three classes, presented a multiplex of subject positions. If my interest was to explore the concrete lived experience of students in their relation to questions of power and security in society, how could the various textures of our experiences be brought together?

Fiske draws on Bourdieu's theory of habitus (Fiske, 1992, pp. 154-173) that frames much of what we encountered in this first week. Habitus is a linkage of *habitat* as a social environment where we live; and *habit* , the particular patterns of thought, "tastes, and dispositions" (p. 155). A habitus is not a categorical boundary (such as gender or racial identity), rather it is a "conjunctural process by which we experience and enact the forces that form (and potentially transform) the social space and the locatable practices of habitation within it" (p. 163). The habitus is not a description of what is given to us as subjects (our environments, class, gender), but is a description of a social and historical "trajectory" or position that sees practices and identities as mutually informing each other -"it lives in us as much as we live in it" (p. 163).

For me, my definable habitus was illustrated by the academic questions about the Social Studies 30 program. As I read from Fiske, there was, as I entered the action research, a distancing between myself, Rod and the students. We were at home with different questions: my questions about curriculum, Rod's practical concerns about "getting some good ideas about gender issues", and of course, the subjectivities of the seventy five students. We are, as Fiske would describe us, "socially situated bodies" (p. 162), our concerns, our various dispositions, our relative differences in terms of status and privilege, inserted us into the social order. Fiske draws on de Certeau (p. 163) to remind us that as we begin our action research, there is a social order already written upon our bodies, and the concrete practices and activities that we engage in over the next three weeks will produce and circulate concrete experiences of *power* and *security* - the abstracted

concepts I am (academically) exploring in this project. Can any two way exchange take place between my habitus and that of a student? How do I resist the academic habit of generalizing and abstracting the complex of differences among the students, of distancing each of us in such a way that renders our subjectivity unintelligible to the other?

For Fiske, the academic habitus is a house constructed from the straw of abstraction and generalization. How do I find a way of engaging in conversation with students about *identity* and *agency, power* and *security* in a way that acknowledges the fluidity and volatility of their daily lives? In his recent book, *we gotta get out of this place* (1992), Grossberg explores the need for a disciplined mobilization, of forming affective alliances to achieve a postmodern agency. To this end, Grossberg offers "affective investments" in the construction of our location in daily life, as a way of capturing our "distances and accesses, intensities and densities" that form our sensibilities and mobilities (p. 107). Affect represents "the energy invested in particular sites: a description of how and how much we care about them" (p. 397). Affect, for Grossberg, includes the set of relations referred to as "volition," "will," "commitment," and "passion" (pp. 81-82). Affect is articulated or injected into what is signified, in this way "affect privileges passion and volition over meaning".

Taking up Grossberg here allows me to work with the students in understanding the vectors of their investment in reality. In my work with the students I need to avoid the temptation to celebrate difference (e.g. gender), or other categorizations, as if they mattered to all students. My academic habitus position puts me in jeopardy of signaling to the students before we begin, what are the things that matter. By valorizing "women's issues" or "power" or "security" as markers worthy of our time and effort, I stand in danger of simply answering too many questions ahead of time (p. 94). As with any work in cultural analysis, my time with the students needs to acknowledge the volatility and fluidity of the terrain called "the classroom".

Given affect as "the energy invested in particular sites: a description of how and how much we care about them" (p. 397) the classroom activities need to engage these sites. In the end, no matter what learning activities we engage in this week, the fact remains that students have the power to invest and register their differences. Some students will share these investments, some will manufacture them to satisfy my questions, others will be intimidated or disinterested in the project. The students, as individuals "are always simultaneously located in a number of fluid, temporary and competing positions" (p. 369). Any activities I take up with them, and any writing or reporting about what "we" do, is limited by two things. Firstly, the classrooms as a group is what Grossberg might call a highly volatile and "fluid" community. Secondly the "we" I write about is a floating signifier that has the effect of erasing differences and constructing abstractions and generalities that have little significance outside the academic habitus.

The week's activities then, can be read as the students talking back to the academic discourses

(feminism, postmodernism, cultural studies) that perhaps have not only answered the questions ahead of time, but have asked the wrong questions. These opportunities to talk back to the discourses (and the subset of questions they raise about the students), included a discussion of survey research on teenagers, films on 'women's issues', and explorations of their personal visions for their futures. These activities were designed with the intent of deriving some sense of the affective investment we brought to the research project. The descriptions that follow of classroom activities and student comments throughout the following chapters is intended to position students as multiple subjectivities who take up and discard the project as we proceed as a fluid and volatile community. What follows then is a description of some of their positionality and passions, some of their agendas and tactics for dealing with the world. The intent here is a political one - of locating places where students can speak about their affective investments in the world. Confronting this political question is essential to dealing with the curriculum project of re-reading the Social Studies 30 curriculum.

Phase One Begins: Visiting the Question

The first day with the students began on a cold February Monday morning. The three classes we were working with included two Social Studies 20 classes (first period in the morning and last in the afternoon), and a Social Studies 10 class (immediately after lunch). Each day in the period before lunch Rod and I would have time to review the first Social Studies 20 class and plan for the remainder of the day. There were a total of 75 students in the classes, 50 females and 25 males.

The opening introductions varied somewhat from class to class, but we felt it important to follow a common plan with the students in order to introduce the project and this week's work in a systematic way. As the first day turned out, the students seemed fairly receptive to what we were undertaking. In reviewing the day's events I sense from Rod's read back (see Appendix B 3) the differences in the way the classes proceeded on this first day. As Rod's comments indicate, the vigor and enthusiasm displayed by the students varied markedly from class to class. During our work together over the next three weeks, Rod's read backs acted as an anchor from which we could compare what took place in each class.

In the three classes I began by introducing some of the educational concerns and issues surrounding discrimination against women. I emphasized to the classes that our work together might be about seeing how social studies as a course might help to open up some of these questions. So on the board I delineated between the broad issues of gender bias and exclusion and the particular question that I was looking into - mapping out changes to the Social Studies 30 curriculum. To further open the discussion I shared some recent research with the students about what teenage girls think of some of the issues that we would be exploring in the next few

days. Explaining the background to the *A Capella* study by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, I outlined a few of its findings:

> 91% of teenage girls strongly agreed, or agreed with the statement "I think women have just as good a chance of making it in the world as men." 9% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. (p. 17). The study found female adolescents varied in their opinions about gender issues. While many feel pressured to fit into an idealized image one girl reported "I feel really good when I walk down the street and men look at me" (xxiv). Another reports: "I feel really good about myself. I don't feel like I've ever been discriminated against getting a summer job...I've got the future in my own hands".
> (A Capella CTF, November 1990, p. xxv).

These remarks from *A Cappella* proved very helpful in opening the discussion with the students. In this approach I was not positioning the females in the classes as being a unitary object to be studied and talked about. As the students reminded me in their comments about the *A Cappella* study, "it's not quite that way for me." This is the danger I found in the surveys that have recently contributed to a general exploration of young men and women. *"We're Here, Listen To Us!* (Holmes and Silverman, 1992), *Teen Trends* (Bibby, 1991), and *A Survey of Attitudes toward Human Rights and toward Self in Alberta Schools* (Alberta Education, 1993) are examples of such efforts. Indeed, Rod and I decided to conduct our own survey with the students (to be discussed later in the chapter). Yet I am reminded of the debate over dealing with differences that Crosby (1992) underscores in trying to avoid the tendency to obscure pluralities that may be obscured under the guise of 'feminine identity'. As Crosby writes, "I am my differences" (p. 137); and these need to be worked with and engaged to "question constantly our most powerful concepts" (p. 142). Again from Grossberg, I deploy his sense (from de Certeau, 1984) that the body is constructed and written upon, but that it is never passive: there is danger in trying to write "teenager" as a normalized subjectivity. In the postmodern condition people do not place a lot of trust or commitment in planes of meaning or signification: the ruptures and gaps that continue to appear render such investment problematic. Meaning and affect have been broken apart (Grossberg, 1992, p. 223). So in engaging the students I had to be aware that our exchanges would be as with a river simultaneously shallow and deep, calm and turgid.

I felt it was important for the students to see the distinction between the questions they might have (about their own experiences) and the way these questions might be foregrounded within a reformed Social Studies 30. My intent was to share my question with the students in a way that might suture in our various understandings of issues surrounding gender. Whether or not this was successful can be read through the discussions that followed in the classes that day. I will review the course of these discussions.

"Do we share a common interest in exploring the question of whether or not males and females view political and economic issues differently?" This for us became the focal point of our exchange that day. After briefly explaining the Social Studies 30 program and the limitations I

saw in the program (as mapped out in Chapter One) I posed this question to the students: "What is the first thing you think of when you hear the words *politics* and *economics*?" The responses from two of the classes were as follows: government (3), boring - all they do is argue (3), nothing changes (3), they're all crooks, liars (3), corruption (2), mostly old men involved (2), a waste of time (2), Brian Mulroney (2), taxes (3), scam artists (2), political cartoons (2) leadership (2), wasting our money (2), we can't do anything about it (2).

Both Rod and I were struck by the negativity displayed by the students. Their responses were quick and vigorous - a lot of chattering and laughter followed as different students hurled charges against politicians in general. Several students in each class just sat and stared at the rest of us, others doodled. As an experienced social studies teacher I was struck by the realization that I had seldom asked such an open-ended question of students before. Rather than *citizens in waiting*, as troped out by the current Social Studies program, I saw before me what I call *cynizens* in waiting. Later in this chapter the results of our survey of student attitudes will explore this resentment of politics. What I read in the student comments was the sense of frustration that Judy Rebick (Chair of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women), sees across Canada; a profound sense of "disjuncture" between politicians, leaders, the media and the people (CBC Morningside, April 22, 1993.) Rebick calls up the case of the defeat of the Charlottetown Accord where the political elites in the country seemed to be heading in one direction and the people in another. I was struck by one student's remark that "politics seems to go on without us. No matter what people say the government does what it wants." Another student piped up, "yes, look at the GST".

Was their complaint that of the hyperreal simulation of a politics that seems to go on without them? Or do I mistakenly privilege their negative reactions or write the students off as adolescent malcontents? I recall Baudrillard who might name their text a "passive aggressive text", one that in the hyperreal simulation of "the delirious state of things...must drive to a delirious point of view." (Baudrillard, *La Transparence du mal*, cited in Kroker (1992), p. 66.) For students I ask the question that Baudrillard raises for disappearing bodies in hyper-reality: " That is our only architecture today: great screens on which are reflected atoms, particles, molecules in motion. Not a public scene or true public space but gigantic spaces of circulation, ventilation and ephemeral connection" (Baudrillard, *Simulations*, Cited in Kroker, p. 66). So their comments act upon me as I wonder about the disingeniousness of effecting any change on the social studies program. I sense their exhaustion with politics and their sense of being scandalized by its corruption and pernicious nature. Is this akin to the experience that Singer talks about with pornography - living "a phenomenon of sex without bodies" (Singer, 1993, p. 38)? There appears for these students little investment in politics - there is no appropriate site for them so "it goes on without them." So the rhetorical question has been raised for me - can there be a politics without

bodies?

The next question I raised with the students was "Do you think girls view or treat politics and economics differently?" Again, the question was raised as one that both Rod and I wanted to explore with the students. A range of responses included:

Most people would rather have men in charge (1)

Women see it as a waste of time (2)

Women don't have the time (2).

Women don't like to play stupid games (2)

Men love formal rules and procedures (1)

Women know politics is screwed up so they want to stay out of it (2)

There was a strong sense from both male and female students that politics made the men "act in stupid ways," that "somehow the game takes over." Although the classes varied in their responses, overall there was a sense that although women were probably not as influential in the political process, in the words of one student, "it was so screwed up, who cares?" At this point we introduced the film to the students.

The film, *No Way, Not Me!* was levered as a discussion of the issues that we had been exploring so far. The film described the economic and political impacts on women as a group as described by Rosemary Brown. The premise of the film was that the promise of a man 'taking care' of a woman through marriage was an illusory one. (Rod's read back reviews details of the film.) We asked the students to be prepared to discuss these questions:

1. What is the general argument presented in the film?
2. Do you find the film convincing?

We intended these questions to initiate an exchange between the students. As Rod's read back indicates, there was a thoughtful response to the film by many students. As Rod's comments suggest, students were divided on the question of personal responsibility. One student remarked, "it's no one else's fault but your own when a marriage breaks up." Another commented, "why should we (the government) pick up the bills for a broken marriage?" A number of students pointed out that the film was only advocating tougher child support laws (70% of such payments were in default in some provinces). A number of students agreed that the film did an effective job showing the risks in trusting "the system". It was agreed by the students that, as one student remarked, "the bottom line is that women get screwed after a divorce usually."

The film elicited surprise from many students, especially girls, about the scarcity of jobs for women and the low pay. One girl asked, "you mean even with a two year community college degree that lady couldn't get a job?" Many students expressed dismay when Rod and I commented on the national unemployment rate and that a degree is not a guarantee of a job. In a

wealthy community such as this one, other students felt, "well we can always stay stuck here." Many of the male students were upset with the "attack on us" by Rosemary Brown. (In the film Brown warns an audience of young women about "trusting too much" in a man and marriage.)

Overall, the viewing of the film acted again to invite contestation and exchange over our language. Constantly students questioned each other about terms like "responsible", "smart choices" , and "love". The film brought us together to write a text within a text. I recall now how the film loosened us all up. I felt less tense sitting at the back of the room, watching as they engaged parts of the film with whispers. We shared glances of surprise at some of the more startling statistics mentioned in the film. These provocations seemed to create some common ground. While I watched the film I noticed several students starting to take notes and follow along more closely as the film progressed. In all three classes the discussion of the film went much better than the earlier, introductory opening discussions. As the day progressed Rod and I grew more able to exchange comments and engage each other with the students. By the last class's viewing of the film, Rod had taken over the discussion with the students and I sat at the back of the room. Through the discussion of the film with the students we became more of a team.

How boys see girls, how girls see boys.

Given the portrayal of the lives of others in the future in the film *No Way, Not Me!*, I asked the students about the title of an imaginary counter-film to this one: *For Sure, That's Me!* This film, I explained could be about their lives as they wish them to be. I paused while I asked them to consider their "dream future". Invariably comments about winning the lottery or finding a perfect mate were offered. I drew their attention back to the difference between these two films: *No Way, Nor Me!* vs. *For Sure, That's Me!* I asked them to consider projecting themselves into the future and imagine that they had accomplished their goals and were happy. To help the class compare possible patterns and differences between boys and girls, we would all imagine it was twenty years from now and we would complete a want ad for a partner (see Assignment: *How do boys see girls? How do girls see boys?* in Appendix B 1.)

We provided the students with sample want ads from the personal columns of the *Globe and Mail* (Friends and Companions). These examples were used to remind the students that the intent here was to present "your best image of an ideal you in twenty years." By completing these ads, we might come to a better understanding of how we see ourselves and what we see on others as potential mates. These ads, as I read through Grossberg, would tease out some of our affective investments while acknowledging the playful volatility and contradictions that make up our commitments.

In reviewing these samples I note that we did not include any ads from the gay community,

an omission on our part. On the two days I reviewed the *Globe and Mail* no such samples appeared. Anyway, I doubted that any student would risk 'coming out' as this high school was "quite homophobic" as one student told me. Numerous comments about 'fags' and 'lesbos' throughout my three weeks with the students indicated that this student's comment was well grounded. Despite this, it was a mistake not to include such ads since their exclusion perpetuates the occlusion of a gay possibility. This occlusion is evident in the recent attitude survey conducted by Alberta Education of high school students (Alberta Education, 1993). While a broad range of attitudes towards various marginal groups were surveyed, there was no attempt made to include questions about the gay community. There can be no excuse for such an omission from a government agency, such as the Human Rights Commission, that co-sponsored the study.

The students were asked to prepare their ads for the next day. In the next class these ads would be discussed in small groups to deal with the questions listed at the bottom of the assignment sheet. Typed copies would be collected in Thursday's class and circulated on Friday. In this way we might construct our own text of personal ads. Both Rod and I would prepare ads as well. Many students were intrigued by the possibility of finding out, as one student put it, "what turns on social studies teachers besides the news ". Both Rod and I felt that this first day had gone well.

Our intention on the second day with the students (Tuesday), was to explore the theme of differences between *how girls see boys, and how boys see girls.* Embedded in this question though, was the vision females and males had of themselves. We read our ads as our story. There was to be a playfulness in this constructing and reading of our stories about ourselves and each other. At the risk of trivializing Caputo's deployment of Kierkegaard's conception of "remembering forward", I see our work together as an unfolding of a possibility (Caputo, 1987). There is a playful sense in seeing ourselves talk about the possibilities for our future. As we engage each other, I see us interpreting the limitations that we have placed on our sense of what the future holds. Sample ads completed by the students are included in Appendix B 2 .

The males and females were split up and each group discussed the personal ads the students prepared. What surprised Rod and I was the openness and enthusiasm with which the students discussed their ads. I am convinced dividing the students up was a good idea. It is worth noting that we almost decided at the last minute not to separate the males and females. Such a move would have limited much of the playfulness and ease with which the females and males talked. Students commented that the atmosphere for both groups was relaxed and non-threatening. The small focus groups worked well, we had each group select one ad to read to the class. The common characteristics the students noted from these and their own ads are provided as follows:

Female Responses: (In order of frequency. * Indicates very strong or unanimous agreement)

What I expect of a companion:
financially established, secure*
well educated*
sensitivity (patient, honest, trustworthy)*
intelligent
fun to be with, sense of humour
fit, athletic
non-smoker
not possessive
adventurous (in and out of bed)
men shouldn't be threatened by my success

What I expect of myself:
financially stable, independent*
(but not as well-off as the males)*
fit, athletic*
sociable (lots of friends)
well educated
well-travelled
free to experience life (shopping, interests)
children (low as a priority)

Males Responses: (In order of frequency. *Indicates very strong or unanimous agreement)

What I expect of a companion:
attractive *
athletic, fit*
committed to our relationship*
interesting personality
tolerant, understanding
financial independence
well educated
likes housework
likes what I like

What I expect of myself:
financially very successful*
well educated*
fit, athletic*
committed to a relationship
don't mind having a woman dependent on me financially
having children may or not be an issue
outdoorsy

The girls in all classes agreed that financial resources and education were far more important than physical appearance or age. One girl remarked, "I want to know that the guy cares about me and is reliable - how he looks isn't that important." This was a telling point in the discussion because until compelled to make choices between the various characteristics a future mate might have, the girls commented (in detail) about attractiveness. (These descriptions were typically of "a tall, muscular, dark-skinned male who had a nice smile.") When forced to choose, financial and security considerations became more prominent. We discussed this in relation to the film *No Way,*

Not Me! Many of the girls recognized the "trap" they were setting for themselves (in the words of one student).

An interesting turn in our discussions took place when Rod and I shared our ads with the students. Students were intrigued at our descriptions of what we were looking for. One girl started to laugh when she realized that she had picked one of our ads out of the pile of ads as her "ideal companion." Another student joked about my ad - "you sure don't want much-maybe you'd better be prepared to be alone for a long time."

As I look back on this day, I see it as an important one in terms of drawing the students, Rod, and I, together. I have no illusions that all students were keenly interested in the project. Several students could be seen scribbling their ads in class before they were handed in. One student complained - "this is stupid" and refused to hand in ad. It was evident that as a group the students shared with Rod and I a sense of the everyday and mundane contradictions that act to overburden our identities. This is Britzman's sense of the need to avoid treating ourselves and students as unitary subjects who slide easily into stable meanings and identities (Britzman, 1991, p. 88).

So what did we find out about *how boys see girls, how girls see boys*? As we continued to discuss the ads we realized that there was not a "typical male ad" or a "typical female ad". Perhaps in a loose sense, there was an indication of how, according to Derrida, "a text functions as desire". Lather (1991 a) draws this interpretation of Derrida based on Kearney (1984, p. 124). In this deployment of Derrida I see our desires (as our texts) as simultaneously laden with inconsistencies and commonalties. In terms of our action research, there were coherent patterns that would appear and disappear as different students slid in and out of the conversation. What the lists above represent then to me is a coherence that allows us to see our ads as a text that creates a network of volition (after Buchmann and Floden, 1992) that is weaved in the world as we change within it. The metaphor of a web or woven cloth that describes our disjointedness is one that I import from Buchmann and Floden in their call for educators as researchers to forgo consistency and certitude and embrace instead the "rebel angel of coherence" (p. 8); theirs is a research metaphor that questions modernist assumptions about how we do research and how we write about it. There is a powerful hermeneutics in framing the lists that we generated around our ads as a "network of volition". Buchmann and Floden (p. 6) draw on Lindblom to illustrate the distinction between consistency and coherence.

> One examines many interrelationships among volitions in all direction and achieves at best a greatly flawed consistency that might be called coherence .... Coherence is admittedly a loose concept, but its obvious alternative, "consistency," is too rigid.... What ordinary people do to achieve coherence does not greatly differ in main outline from what scientists do in their scientific work... the structure of one's volitions, then , takes the form of a web rather than a hierarchy, a web "stretched across the ground of experience, serving as one of the structures that unifies it" ... For any one person, the search for coherence becomes

> an extension of the task not of finding but of forming, creating, or willing (1990, pp. 39-40).

I offer the sample student ads in Appendix B 2 framed as pointing to a "network of volition", or as marking some "affective investments" (after Grossberg, 1992) of students.

Students reading themselves as subjects of research

Following discussion of the ads, we proceeded to the Student Questionnaire (see Appendix B 4). As we explained to the students, the ads gave us some indication of how we might see ourselves in twenty years. The intent of the survey was to get a rough sense of some of our concerns and beliefs about our lives today. We explained that the surveys were based on questions given in other surveys, in the past, that tried to identify provincial or national patterns in the concerns expressed by teenagers about social issues today. I referred to the surveys mentioned in class on the previous day. The intent of these surveys would be to get some indication of the feelings of students in the three classes on similar issues. After completing the surveys and tallying the results, we would review the results as a group to determine what we found out. In this way, the survey and the subsequent student analysis would act to read back ourselves to the other provincial and national surveys. The surveys were not designed to gaze upon the students as a group, but to give us an opportunity to create openings for talking about patterns of coherence.

Following is a breakdown of each section of the survey. I will briefly outline the results of the survey and how the students intercepted the results. I will also provide my own observations about the context of the questions and our students' responses in relation to other research studies mentioned earlier in this chapter. The purpose here is not to provide in any way a comprehensive quantitative analysis of our survey results. Admittedly, the data generated by the survey is enormous (refer to Student Questionnaire - Summary of Results in Appendix B 5).

I must admit to being overwhelmed by the enormous amount of data the survey yielded. Yet in planning the survey questions my interest was not in finding out about the students, but in learning about the meanings they brought to the questions. As the review of the results that follows indicates, I had examined a number of national surveys that generalized and abstracted about "teenagers" and "youth". The importance for me, in doing this work was in letting the students decide what they saw as significant about the questions and the reported 'results'. This was particularly important to me as I resist framing the males and females in the classes as unitary subjects of research. As mentioned in Chapter Two, gender is best seen as a metaphor that describes social relations, and as a culturally constructed category of thought (Flax 1990 b, p. 25). Gender, and its effects, should not be *assigned* to the subject as a given that is constituted by surveys or other discursive instrumentalties. Using the survey to read the students forgets Lather's point that "women" is a "site of power" where the discourses need to be vigorously

interrogated (1991 b).

A total of 70 students completed the survey, 23 males and 47 females. The age breakdowns were: 14 - 1; 15 - 14; 16 - 41, 17 - 13; 18 - 1. Of the seventy students surveyed, 68 indicated they planned on attending post-secondary education. 34 students worked part-time after school, 36 did not. There was little difference in the sex breakdowns of the students in the various age categories or the responses to these opening question. An equal number of males and females worked part-time. Given the class demographics there was a wide gap between the number of female respondents and male (more than 2 to 1).

To facilitate the review of the survey we divided the students into groups of four. Each group was assigned a section of the questionnaire results to review and highlight for the class. Each group was asked to briefly identify one or two "most surprising results" of the survey and to offer the group's reaction to the question: "Do the results of the section you reviewed seem consistent with what you know of students in this school?" Rod and I emphasized that these were questions to get discussion going - the groups should feel free to report on any other aspects of the survey results they felt important. (For example - were some questions confusing? How seriously do you think most people took the survey?) In the following I will review the discussions that took place around each of the sections of the student questionnaire.

Section B asked students to indicate the degree of confidence they had in the people in a variety of institutions. Students noted that overall the top two choices were the police (72.9%), and the United Nations (64.3%). What was dramatic was the difference between male and female responses. Females rated the police as highest, at 79.1% while the males rated the school as highest at 70.4%. The females by contrast rated the school at only 25.6%. The fact that the school board rated so low overall was also noted by the students. Both Rod and I felt awkward discussing this with the students but they were eager to volunteer a long list of reasons why they felt so strongly about the school board's relatively low rating. What became clear from their answers was that for the boys the school was "o-k" but for the girls it was frustrating. When I designed the survey I had intended to get a sense of the relative differences, if any, there might be in confidence in public institutions. The question seemed innocent enough. Now I was caught - the students were all too willing to share their reasons. These included perceived inequities and loopholes in the school's attendance policy and the "ways rules are unenforced differently for different people."

Students commented that they felt confidence in the police because they "seemed to do a good job." This was similar to the reasons given for supporting the United Nations. When asked what these organizations did so well, the students were rather unsure. One student speculated, "maybe it's because we have only an image of these things that we think they are so great." This seemed to bring some agreement to the class. Rod and I speculated with the class, perhaps the

further away you are from an organization or agency the more effective it appears; the less one sees the contradictions of practice versus theory. One student remarked that maybe the question was "screwed up" because it did not distinguish between different people or parts of the school. She felt she had "lots of confidence in some teachers but not others." At this point I realized again a conversational opening that I dare not cross into. Ethically what right did I or any of the students have in becoming more specific at this point. Indeed, I began to realize that questions such as this one invite difficulties. Students wanted to deal with these issues but both Rod and I felt compelled to leave the discussion at this point.

The low level of confidence in the federal and provincial government was also dramatic and surprised even the students themselves. 45.7% of students overall reported very little or no confidence at all in the provincial government and 47.1% reported the same for the federal government. Bibby reports the same lack of confidence in political institutions (1991, p. 310).

What was dramatic with the students in our group was the difference in their confidence in the school as compared to the national average. Bibby (p.174) found the police to rate number one with teens nationally, with the federal and provincial governments near the bottom. This was consistent with our group as well. By contrast, Bibby's survey found teens rated "the schools" number two. Rod and I agreed that this question needs to be further explored within the school itself.

Section C asked students to respond to a variety of statements about their feelings and attitudes concerning school, work, relationships and personal issues. A number of these items were drawn from *A Cappella* (1992) and Holmes (1992). What the students commented on in reviewing the results was the difference between males and females who strongly agreed/agreed with statement #10, "I think women have an equal chance of making it in the world as men. "70.4% of males felt this way while only 46.5 % of females felt this way (18.5% of males disagreed/strongly disagreed, compared to 39.5% of females). This caused some discussion in class with one female student asking one of the male students, "I can't explain it to you since you've never had to deal with it (discrimination)". (This result contrasts to the *A Capella* study Appendix 1, p. ii) where 92% of young women agreed that they had an equal chance to make it in the world. Holmes (p. 75) reports low levels of concern about equality among young teens as well.) I could not account for these differences between our group and the other surveys. What was apparent however was the strong sense of frustration felt by these girls. One pointed to the local pulp mill and mines and commented, "even after college I won't make as much as the men who work in town here." Another student piped in, "well don't go to school, stay here and get a job." The student shot back, "as if they'd hire girls." The class went on to elaborate on their sense that locally it is very difficult for females to gain access to these high paying jobs. They laughed off comments that "things are changing." Clearly there was a problem locally that had some

impact on the female students who responded to the survey. This again may be an issue that needs to be addressed locally as a potential issue for social studies.

A second question sparked a lot of student interest; item 13, "I have lots of confidence." 88.9% of males strongly agreed/agreed while only 44.2% of females did (no male students disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement, 25.6% of female students did). Asked why there might be such differences locally, some girls responded in interesting ways. "What does the question mean by confidence? Like, does it mean I can do everything I'm expected to do-well?" This was an important point felt by another female student who commented, "guys feel better about themselves because less is expected of them - they can come to school looking gross and no one cares." "If I was a guy I would feel more confident because I know I could handle the little that they do." This caused some debate in class and helped problematize "confidence" in my own mind. Perhaps conflating "confidence" as "self-esteem" or "personal worth" is a discursive construct that needs to be interrupted. These girls were suggesting, it seems, a sense that confidence is a capacity or skill that one develops separate from feelings of self-worth. 72.1% of girls reported that they feel that they "can do most things well" (question 14). Perhaps confidence has something more to do with how one sees the Other seeing you. Bibby (1991, p. 147) found the same pattern in his national sample - 82% of females reported "I can do most things well" but only 61% reported "I have lots of confidence." Bibby, unfortunately does not attempt to unpack the meaning of confidence and automatically assumes that Canadian females "are getting the message that they are not up to scratch" (p. 147). Extending Bibby's argument, based on the discussions in our classes, I suggest that many female students feel "up to scratch" but resent having to "scratch" so much. As one girl pointed out, "I get up early to look half-decent and I end up going to bed late to study to get half- decent marks." I wonder if this was a Lacanian allegory of *woman always being seen as half-decent* (of lacking) in the gaze of the phallus?

The students also expressed surprise about the responses to the statement, "I like school" (see question 1). When questioned though, they were quick to point out that "this doesn't mean we like the school part," referring to their classes. As question 2 indicates, a vast majority find their lives enjoyable. This is consistent with the national studies such as Bibby (1991, pp. 156-157). As we proceeded through the questions, it became clear that many of them could lead to lengthy discussion. Why for example did 11.1% of males and 13.9% of females not feel safe at home? Who were these people? I suggested to the classes that these issues need to be explored further in groups and as individuals. Hopefully the activities over the next few cycles of our action research would allow this exploration to take place.

Moving on to Part D, Sources of Enjoyment Survey, the students remarked on the close congruence between their group results and the national figures from Bibby (p. 23). Friendship ranked number one with both males and females in our survey and the national one. Dating was

second for the girls while sports was second for boys. What struck the students was that the males reported less enjoyment from drinking than the females (see question 15). Initially Rod and I questioned the survey results and had the surveys rechecked. We were surprised by the response of the students to this result however - they found nothing odd about this. As several students pointed out, "the guys drink more and don't think its such a big deal." A female student summarized the feelings of many who said, "when I drink it is something planned, sort of special." "For sure" remarked another, especially since my parents don't like it when I drink but say it is o-k for my brother." Another equally odd question Rod and I encountered was one Bibby (p. 12) points out from his study concerning enjoyment derived from parents and pets. 68% of the teens he surveyed (who owned pets) reported getting greater enjoyment out of their pets as compared to their parents. My first reading of this left me incredulous until we discussed the survey with the students. As the results indicate for items 14 and 18, 51.4% of students reported a great deal or quite a lot of enjoyment from their pets as compared to 40.0% for parents. (What was noted by the students was the fact that 21.4% of students reported getting very little or no enjoyment from their parents - the figure for females was 27.9%, over one in four!) As the one student indicated about her pets - "I never get into a fight with my dog." "Parents expect too much, pets expect very little" countered another. As one student admitted, "I was sadder when my cat died than when one of my relatives did."

Our conversation shifted to the next part of the survey, the Parts E and F, Values Survey and Valued Goals Survey. Modified from Bibby (pp. 15-19), these items indicated to the students, their sense of "how much we are alike compared to others." A review of both scales with the students drew this out quite dramatically for the students. Bibby found honesty to be important to teens - 100% of our students indicated this was very important/important. Students found this result rather amusing since, as one student remarked, "most of us don't tell the truth all the time." "Yeah, remarked another student, we are so contradictory - we all want honesty but of all the items on the list this is probably the one we practice the least." I sensed the overburdened nature of what they were struggling with, "honesty" coded as consistent and serialized performative acts to deny inventiveness and creativity. The students sense the contradiction of wanting consistent honesty from others but realizing they are unwilling (unable?) to give it to others. A student provided a refiguration that demonstrates their muddle and bewilderment with a statement that defies rationality; "I'm always honest, usually." He catches himself and realizes the impossibility of this figuration. Yet I wonder if this struggle is not what Schrag (1989, p. 96) was working through when he writes of "transversality" as a coding for a new metaphor that describes an ethic that emerges neither from transcendentalism nor historicism. In the postmodern, Schrag seems to be struggling through the conflict between claims to *a priori* conditions (transcendentalism) and universalized conditions that act to sediment ethics upon

subjects (historicism). Tranversality seeks to admit our ethics into to the light of concretized principles that shun abstracted principles limited to selected modes of discourse (pp. 98-100). Perhaps then, "I'm always honest, usually" acts as a marker of his desire to be honest within dialogical limits. These limits are defined only in the experiences of rupture and incommensurability of living with the Other day to day.

So much of our discussion on values this day shifted around questions such as those raised around honesty. There were sustained discussions, moments of quiet, ruptures of questions that had no answers. What accounts for the strong agreement between the males and females in both the Values Survey and the Valued Goals Survey? Items such as forgiveness (number 7 - Values Survey) illustrated close agreement in our survey. Yet Bibby (1991, p. 141) found that 71% of females found this very important and only 45% of males did. Why was creativity and imagination rated relatively low? As one student sarcastically commented - "it won't get you a job."

These were questions that puzzled us, that engaged us both in small groups and in class discussion. Yet other observations came easily. Why was cultural-group heritage rated so low (8.6% rated it as important)? As Bibby (p. 16) found with teens across Canada, our students see their family's heritage as of quaint interest, but not something "I think about very often", as one student commented. The students raised the importance of friendship and being loved as indicated both on their survey and the Bibby survey (p. 15). As we continued the students tended to emphasize the similarities rather than the differences between themselves and national reporting groups. Was this kind of an attempt to write themselves into the larger group I wondered?

The last section of the survey (Part G: Issues Survey) asked the students to rate the relative importance of thirty personal and social issues that had been gleaned from the variety of research instruments referred to earlier in the chapter (Bibby (1992), Holmes (1992), Canadian Teachers' Federation (1991)). Given the wide range of issues, the students felt there was a strong congruence with the national studies on some issues such as AIDS, the environment and child abuse. (Bibby, p. 76) found these to be the most important for teenagers. These all rated in the top five for our students as well. Issues surrounding national unity and French English relations were the lowest in both Bibby 's study (p. 84) and our own. What struck the students were the "surprises" such as the 44.4% of males who indicated they were concerned about item 24, "my sexual orientation." As it turns out, many of the male students interpreted this question to mean they were concerned that others would accuse them of being "faggots" or that other males around them might be "faggots." There was a strong sense in all three classes that homosexuality was not something to be tolerated. One student captured the antipathy of many students when he remarked, "its o-k to be gay as long as you don't practice it around the school - fags holding

teenagers because we seem different than them". I was reminded of the temptation not to valorize "student voice" as some sort of shady spot that needs to be illuminated. I was troubled by the student's comment but wondered about my place, my authority to say or do anything about it.

The difference between male and female students was noted on items 23 (my weight) and item 30 (excessive stress in my life). Male students expressed surprise that 44.2% of females thought that weight would be a very serious/serious concern. (Bibby, p. 91 found 40% of girls to feel the same way, *A Capella* (p. i) found "weight to be a general preoccupation" with girls). Coupled with this, 61.7% of females indicated excessive stress was a very/serious problem compared to 37.0% of males. When asked, one girl commented, "it is not one thing - just everything, friends, school, all kinds of stuff." The comment about friendship prompted another student to remark, "losing friends is tough - boyfriend or girlfriend." In reviewing our survey's earlier indication that friendship was so highly valued, I reviewed Bibby's remarks that he had reported by many teens regarding the high turn-over of friends in high school (p. 92). This was echoed in one of our students' comments; "things change fast sometimes with friends - one day you are best friends, the next who knows." A few students picked up on this remark and initiated a few nods from other female students. The male students seemed puzzled.

The last area that students identified in their comments was the high rate reported for item 29, "problems in my family." 61.7% of females and 55.5% of males reported this as a very serious/serious concern. This proved an awkward subject to discuss in the classes but it was a situation that obviously was highlighted by one student's comment, "weird stuff goes on in every family nobody talks about." Indeed, as I thought about the student's remark I wondered about the wide range of "weird stuff" that we had papered over so quickly in our review of the survey.

Circulating through the classes this day was an emerging sense of the impossibility of really making sense of all of the sense we were making. The range of questions we were opening up for ourselves as a group, and as individuals, seemed a necessary impossibility at this point. In our subsequent work many of these "weird" issues were to emerge.

I had a sense of Higgins' questions: "Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it?" (cited in McHale, 1992, p. 33). As I review the range of questions on the survey I wonder if the work we have done today has invited questions from the students rather than sedimenting my own questions upon them. By reviewing the surveys and writing our own texts around them, perhaps there have been sufficient interruptions and gaps where many of them feel theirs are not the wrong questions to be asking. This, is after all, research we are constructing together.

Textual Poaching and Social Issues

As outlined in Chapter One, a nodal point for engaging student "affective investments" in relation to social studies issues would be textual poaching (after Jenkins, 1992). Jenkins' introductory work on textual poaching is important reading for educators interested in exploring the richness of popular culture. Jenkins' writing is grounded by de Certeau's theory of poaching as "appropriation" by consumers of text and film (1984). For de Certeau, poaching is the tactic of the "nomad" who does not own or have access to the preserves of literary text or filmic production. These nomads move "across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves" (p. 174). De Certeau raises the political question of authorship and control over the meanings given to text - and the means used to regulate and control the circulation of these meanings. Under the regimen of produced meanings the spectators are supposed to act as recipients of Other authored meanings. There is to be no contestation over the Sign.

For me, De Certeau's model speaks eloquently and forcefully about the "meanings" given to social studies concepts such as "politics", "power", and "security". As a teacher educated through the modernist habitus of the academy, "politics" has been about institutions and abstractions. The division between public and private has been forcefully injected into the curriculum. What I hoped to achieve in the following activity was an acknowledgment of the students' ability to act as agents who, in de Certeau's words, are "not here or there" (p. 174). The spatial-temporal interruption offered in this activity will free students to explore their investments in any social issue or concern they choose. What I had hoped to open for the students, was a playful tactic to create their connections to issues that mattered to them, to in Jenkins words, "salvaging bits and pieces of the found material in making sense of their own social experience" (1992, p. 26).

The assignment that was to be completed over the next couple of days is outlined in the student handout *Quantum Leap Assignment* (see Appendix B 6). Students were to identify one or two issues that they felt strongly about. Based on the premise that they could leap into the body of another person (past or present), they were to select a body in which to leap. During this leap the students were to attempt to resolve or tackle the concern in some way. The concept behind the television series *Quantum Leap* was outlined for the students based on Jenkins' (p. 298) reading of the series.

In the series, Sam Beckett, a scientist who is trapped in the Quantum Leap accelerator that he invented, is able to leap in and out of bodies. While in these bodies he is himself, but to outsiders, appears as the host. The leaps are controlled by "God, or Time, or something" that wants to make people's lives better. To assist him during his leaps, Al (his partner) can appear to him in the form of a hologram. Al also has access to a super computer named Ziggy. This computer is essential since it provides the two characters with the background information about

the lives of the people leapt into. As well, Ziggy, is able to provide probabilities of certain outcomes occurring in the event that Sam attempts to change the course of events in people's lives. The program has seen Sam leap into bodies to tackle issues around sexual harassment, civil rights, the Vietnam War, among others.

I read Quantum Leap as an opportunity for providing students to engage issues from a variety of vectors of signification and affective investment, and escaping the need "to be here or there" (after de Certeau). By fictively empowering them to tackle issues that they selected from their Issues Questionnaire, there was the promise of letting them raise their own questions in the face of difficulty. We did not limit the historical or contemporary topics or events students could explore. By rewriting history they could construct new conceptions of the "meanings" of events. As teachers, we remained agnostic about the competing and contradictory interpretations they might bring to events (Jenkins, 1992, p. 33). In a fractal sense, the *Quantum Leap* exercise becomes a highly dissipative form of action research where the students slide between the three modes of technical, practical, and emancipatory work (Grundy, 1990, p. 353). Although this may be a risky over determination of the projects that the students undertook, I see their possibilities as exploring questions of how to be in the world *that they have generated*. Both the questions and the tactics that emerge in their stories will be theirs.

Between Wednesday and Thursday the three classes worked on their assignments. An episode of *Quantum Leap* was shown to the students to ensure everyone had a basic familiarity with the program. Students handed in their assignments on Friday. Six students chose audio tape formats, while the rest presented letters, short stories or other written variations. An annotated listing of some of their work is provided below.

1. A male student leaps back in time to prevent a friend's suicide. Based on an actual experience of the student who thought "what if...?"

2. A female student tries to prevent a friend from getting AIDS by leaping back into time.

3. A male student saves a friend from a vicious assault by leaping back in time.

4. A female student leaps into a the body of a male. The male steps in to stop his friend from raping an acquaintance of the female student.

5. A male student leaps into Mila Mulroney's body and convinces Brian not to pass the GST.

6. A female student leaps into Dr. Kevorkian and helps an acquaintance commit suicide.

7. A female student leaps into Elvis' body back in 1958. She refuses to take the sleeping pills prescribed to him and thus forestalls Elvis' drug addiction problem. Elvis goes on to live a long life.

8. A male student leaps back in time to prevent a scientist who was having sex with a monkey from doing so. This monkey (according to the story) was the one that transmitted the HIV virus to humans thirty years ago.

9. A male student leaps into the body of Eva Braun and assassinates Hitler in 1937. Well researched and quite detailed historically.

10. A female student leaps into the body of King George III and prevents the American Revolution by changing policy towards the Thirteen Colonies.

11. A female student leaps into the past and picks the correct numbers for the 6/49 lottery. Clever concept that describes her "new life" as a result.

12. A female student leaps into a male student's body to try to convince his friends that homosexuality is o-k.

13. A female student leaps into the body of another female who is being abused by her father. The leaper reports the father to the authorities.

14. A female student leaps into Jackie Kennedy and prevents the President's assassination in 1963. The course of U.S. politics changes.

15. A female student leaps into the body of Galen and refuses to perform vivisection of animals. The leaper condemns the medical use of animals and changes the course of medical history that saves millions of animals.

As well as the range of leaps portrayed above, the examples in the Appendix B 7 to B 10 illustrate the devices used by the students to displace the constructed facticity of history with their own fictive creations. What strikes me in these exemplars is the ability of the students to take up historical events and "adapt these symbolic materials and weave them back into their everyday lives", (Jenkins, pp. 40). In "The End of the Slaughter" (Appendix B 8) a female student leaps into the body of a female police officer who takes a complaint against Jeffrey Dahlmer, a mass murderer. As the student explained in class, this story was inspired by the media reports that police had overlooked complaints about Dahlmer. The student extends the story line and ends up with the murderer arrested. In "Nuclear Leap" (Appendix B 9) a male student leaps into the body of Harry Truman and decides not to use atomic weapons against Japan. The student writing as Truman, regrets the decision because too many countries have armed themselves with nuclear weapons and do not fear the consequences of using such weapons. In "Brigetta's Leap" (Appendix B 10) a female student leaps into the body of Hitler's girlfriend. Rather than spurning him, she marries Hitler. Hitler is a happier man and the world is saved from World War II.

What these stories indicate is the willingness of students to burrow beneath the text of history as constructed for them by their textbooks and the popular media. These stories suggest ways of engaging students not to get deeper into "the facts", but to "go wider" with their understandings. While I personally reject many of the formulations and interpretations presented (e.g. that dropping the atomic bombs on Japan in 1945 was necessary to scare nations away from

stockpiling nuclear weapons), this is not a matter of concern here. Certainly this student's work could launch a vigorous inquiry within the social studies curriculum. What I read in these stories is a scribbling in the margins of the histories and experiences that students have been given. In their audiotapes and writings there was a rich variety of rereadings that they authored.

Textual poaching as an introduction to the action research project, was a helpful way of having each of us, as teachers and students, bring forward some concerns and issues into the classroom space. It allowed us to tell some stories. McHale (1992) suggests that we are all in our own ways, storytellers. The definitions of *politics* framed in the current Program of Studies does not permit many of the stories told by the leapers listed above. The question is why not? To McHale, all narratives (here I read curriculum plans too), are difficult to displace over time since their codes become so embedded in everyday experiences (1992, p. 8). Is wanting to write about saving a friend from sexual abuse a less legitimate political activity than writing a letter to your M.L.A. about a provincial issue discussed in the media? Can agency be found in taking the first step by leaping rather than the more conventional response? Is researching Hitler's life and discovering strategic points in his life where he was most vulnerable any less legitimate than knowing on what date he ordered the invasion of Poland? These are questions worthy of some consideration.

There are numerous ways students choose to be agents of change. In one story, a student convinces Morgentaler to give up medicine early in his career. A useful follow-up to this report would be for the student to critique her own understanding of Morgentaler's role in the abortion debate. How significant is Morgentaler to the abortion issue in this country? What evidence is there that if there had not been a Morgentaler another one would have emerged? These are all questions that would allow for a vertical elaboration of the student's exploration of human rights in Canada. By vertical elaboration I refer to going deeper to research concepts already in the curriculum. Horizontal elaborations involve saturating the given facts, concepts, and generalizations in such a way that wider readings of them are possible.

Textual poaching, constructed around social issues offered students an opportunity to write about their affective investments. In reading their stories I am reminded of Grossberg's statement that "resistance is always a local struggle" (1992, p. 392). To fight or take up an issue fundamentally means acting in some localized scene of action. From Probyn (1990) I am reminded that these locations are constructed from the experiences, the locales written upon our bodies. Each of these stories represents in varying degrees, constructed locations authored by the students. As a social studies teacher, my task is to problematize these constructions, to create a troubling volatile politics that questions our attempts to *write in* the locale of the Other who, by definition, is the one who lives in the locale. This locale is a site of "the lived contradictions" and a myriad "pull of events" (p. 182). The dangers in textual poaching lay in the temptation to assume

our stories are anything more than *our* constructions of locations. As Probyn draws from Baudrillard, there is an "erasure" and "amnesia" that is embedded in such common-sense representations of others (p. 183). Thus I neither valorize nor challenge the student who tries to sabotage Morgentaler's medical career. Given more time, I would use her story as the opening of a conversation into who this other might have been as an agent (who tried to change and direct a social condition in this country).

Researchers such as Holmes (1992, pp. 78-84), underscore the sense of many teenagers in Canada that the way "politics" is dealt with in schools ignores many of their own concerns and issues. This problem was reviewed in Chapter One. Textual poaching as a way of opening up a conversation about our affective investments in a variety of social issues played a key role in the success of our first week of action research.

Concluding the First Cycle

The week raised some questions about the nature of action research and my position with Rod in relation to the students. Foremost, was I doing action research or was this a series of probings directed by me as a researcher from the university? This is the question of habitus that I introduced at the beginning of this chapter. Was this not research within the academic habitus that seeks to abstract and generalize such a question as "what is action research?" Rather than focus on what is the generalizable essence of action research, Gauthier (1992, p. 184) maps out a question of *what action research can do* (my italics). To do this he gives the analogy of a machine that has many heterogeneous parts but still performs a distinctive function. Improving school life is such a function. Action research cannot be thought of as outside of the performative context of bodies trying to improve the world. This, I think, is crucial: action research is shaped by its performativity, not by any essence ascribed to it by academics seeking an abstract set of criteria that map out its 'true' nature.

Another issue that persisted in our work was the superficiality with which many students completed the *Quantum Leap Assignment*. At least twenty of the submissions (one out four) were of less than one page in length and demonstrated little attention to detail. Many of these students volunteered as they handed in their assignments that "this was a bad week", or, "I'm just not into this, I've got tons of math to do". In discussing our frustration with the quality of many of the submissions, several students commented that "this might be for grades but it doesn't count that much does it?" There were many contradictory forces at work in the classroom. The action research project remained for many students far removed from them. Their comments reminded me of the differentiation of our social positions - my efforts to forge links and affiliations that Fiske emphasizes in cultural studies research (1992, p. 173) seem wasted at moments like this.

So what do I make of the possibility of action research with the students after our first week?

Is there a "we" that is anything more than an empty signifier that I can appropriate and plug into any shallow representation of our research that I chose? In the postmodern, this is a question of representation that I cannot answer nor avoid trying to struggle with. Here signifiers such as "student voice" take on increasingly less effect as they become exhausted by their own excess. For the students (particularly those who did not expend much effort on the week's activities), I sense much of what we have done may have added to their difficulties as students trying to keep jobs, marks, and friends in tow. In the classroom there was a frenetic activity in the hyperreality of "social studies issues" such as *gender* and *power* that I have contributed to here. Yet by virtue of their being a captive audience in the classroom, for some students the action research project remains as something that they must ignore or resist, or passively take on. "What is this then, but the body as a tensile 'partition-wall': a hinge between the minor language of the possible and the majoritarian grammar of the present" (Kroker, 1992, p. 152). These students who have superficially participated remain caught in the "majoritarian language" of "us doing action research".

Another issue concerning the evaluation of the students' work presented some questions for Rod and I. These questions centered on our position as teachers and evaluators of student work. We have struggled for an 'openness to Otherness' in this project, but it is also true that these assignments are being evaluated as part of the course work. I share Trimbur's disdain for the attempt to paper over the inequalities in power and authority that exist in the classroom (1989, p.615). The effort to establish consensus and eliminate hierarchy serves only to build resentment as individuals are compelled to erase their differences. Both Rod and I could not escape the requirement given to us by virtue of our positions as teachers who must evaluate student performance. With three weeks of the semester devoted to this work, a series of student marks was necessary. To ensure a degree of equity in the evaluation procedure, marking rubrics, such as those in the *Quantum Leap Evaluation Guide* (see Appendix B 6), were provided to students before they began their work. We invited them to give us feedback about their marks and any suggestions about how their work might be evaluated within the limitations of the school setting. Throughout the course of the three weeks we had few questions raised by students. This does not mean there were no problems - it simply indicates none surfaced.

Following completion of the *Quantum Leap* assignments Rod and I spent Friday's classes reviewing the week's work with the students. We elicited their feedback to the assignments and reviewed the issues that emerged for students in their work. Rod's read back describes some of these issues. A brief discussion following a viewing of the film *For Richer, For Poorer* (NFB) took place. The film engaged us in a discussion of the political and economic issues related to the 'personal lives' of Canadian women facing poverty as a result of marriage breakdown. This allowed Rod and I to problematize with the students the role that the media has in shaping our

impressions of issues such as those raised by gender. Given their personal ads, the students were invited to reflect on how they might be looking to the future with some unrealistic or problematic expectations. How the changes in an institutions like marriage has changed their lives led us into a discussion of what 'progress' and 'the future' holds for them. Rapid changes in other areas were explored as well, especially the environment and in the business world. We shared a sense that our personal ads were both naive and hopeful; but as one student suggested, "that's o-k".

Their new found ability to 'control' events through the *Quantum Leap* Assignment was discussed. We shared with them the statistic that out of the 47 girls' assignments, over 38 decided to jump into male bodies. Except for two males, the 23 boys jumped into male bodies. One student responded "well, what can you expect - most of the important stuff that we wanted to fix was screwed up by men." In each of the three classes we discussed the reasons for this breakdown of body leapers. We could not agree on what this might have suggested.

Through the discussion of the film, our ads and the quantum leaps students took, many of us were drawn together. Despite the students in each class who completed the assignments in a cursory manner, and of the few who participated little in the discussions, we were struck by the overall interest the students showed in the work. The students discussed with Rod and I differences in our affective investments, in our commitments to a variety of issues and concerns. We recognized that although 'body leaping' was really just a gimmick, it momentarily gave us a site to speak to each other about issues and tactics, hopes and frustrations. Perhaps we saw each other and ourselves in different ways than when we began. This was an appropriate beginning.

CHAPTER 4
THE JUNKYARD OF DREAMS

Trashing? Modernism

The second cycle of our work began on Monday, April 19, and would continue until the end of the week. Following from the previous phase and the work on the "affective investments" of students in the territory of their daily lives, our second phase would introduce conceptual maps that might be helpful in exploring the cultural sphere and their readings of current social issues and concerns. I wish to preface that I am cautioned by Grossberg's reminder that in pursuing cultural studies, conceptual schemas or "theory can let you off the hook" by foreclosing certain avenues of inquiry (1992, p. 19). While I am reluctant to introduce abstractions and generalizations from the "academic habitus", the possibility that such abstractions might provide an Archimedean point for dialogue compels me to attempt its use.

The conceptual map I hoped to introduce to the students is one generated by Kenneth Gergen's formulation of "pregression" (Gergen, 1991, pp. 231-239). In mapping the postmodern condition, Gergen found it helpful to interrupt the modernist paradigm of progress in the description and analysis of historical or contemporary developments. The modernist narrative is one that describes changes as generally that of improvement, punctuated with momentary setbacks and periods of adjustment. Framed in this manner, inventions such as the automobile are acknowledged to have had some "negative effects" but overall have been indicators of forward growth. Gergen offers the notion of *pregression* as "carrying the culture in reverse" (p. 232), and as a new narrative line that problematizes the faith in modernism. The problems begin slowly at first then accelerate into waves of disruption. What Gergen wants to suggest, is not an apocalyptic vision of modernity's collapse (Jameson and others have done this very effectively), but the need, in the postmodern, for a sensibility that asks "irreverent questions" of the Enlightenment imperatives. Are the 'improvements' in highways, larger homes, extending lifespan, industrial growth, and so on, really for the better?

Of course Gergen's critique of modernism is not a new one. But I found his formulation of pregression offered real possibilities for engaging students in their readings of contemporary developments. Appendix C 2 outlines a student activity that we planned to introduce early in this phase. By exploring their readings of what developments they found fit Gergen's description of pregress, I hoped to engage them in a series of activities that would question some of the modernist assumptions about women, urbanization, and locally identified issues they selected. The week would begin with a discussion of the film *Dying to be Thin*, and how women's bodies have become the site for (standardized and narrow) modernist inscription of 'ideal body type'. Next would follow an application of Gergen's notion of pregression to Los Angeles through the

film *Grand Canyon*. To close the week students would identify issues they felt were pertinent to their reading of pregression as it related to their lives.

I started each of the three classes on Monday by introducing the problem of definitions and how disagreements over the meanings of terms such as *sexual harassment* can confound us. I discussed a recent survey from *Seventeen* magazine (May, 1993, pp. 135-136). According to the survey 89% of female high school students felt they were harassed by "suggestive gestures, looks, comments". Several female students questioned this definition of harassment, claiming that "suggestive looks are o-k if the guy is someone you are interested in". One male student confronted the girls and asked, "so how is a guy supposed to know what to do?" The response was "you know what you're doing - staring is different than a smile and a look of interest". The male student shrugged and stared down at the floor.

I wondered about the tight definition that the *Seventeen* magazine survey gave of *sexual harassment*, and the contradictions the students felt about this definition in their own discussion. In all three classes the definition of harassment proved problematic when survey questions about touching, grabbing, sexual notes, or intimidation were examined. Both male and female students were confused with the survey's definitions (or lack of them) in these areas. As one girl said, "if some jerk grabs me at work it is obvious I'm not going to be happy about it". (Turning to her friend she muttered "but I'm not going to quit over it", referring to her job at a local restaurant.)

As our discussion continued in the Block D class I was conscious of our effort to write ourselves into a sensible definition of *harassment*. It was as if we were busy trying to erase our differences, our contradictory understandings, our inability as one student authoritatively claimed, "to get it". So what is *it*? This definition seemed a transitive object we were struggling to collectively understand - the definition drew us into conversation while we at the same time recursively fell back to our own prior pre-understandings. One moment was poignant when the discussion turned to a survey question that focused on "being leaned over or cornered". 47% of female students felt that this was a form of harassment that they had been subjected to. One girl suggested, "yeah, for sure, guys look down your shirt sometimes when you bend over by your locker" - several female students then proceeded to act out different strategies that male students employed. There were at least four or five parodic performances being played out informally around the room. One girl was laughing as she pretended to swing her head to look simultaneously up her friend's skirt and down her blouse.

There was a frantic energy in their vignettes. The boys were busy trying to deny they did this but were drowned out by the girls. Finally, one of the girls jumped in and said, "but sometimes we want to be looked at, as long as the guy knows where to draw the line." "Yeah, we want to look good but not too much." Here I read Fiske's sense that the culture of everyday life is "a culture of concrete practices which embody and perform differences" (Fiske, 1992, p. 162). As

appalled as I was by the girl's comment, it is Fiske who reminds me that the "body-habitat incarnates the habitus; the habitus informs the body-habitats, and, at the same time, inscribes the larger social order into its incarnated, practiced forms" *(Ibid)*. As with Fiske, I see more here than de Certeau's sense of the inscription of the social order (where males gaze upon the female body and the females lay in waiting for this). For the second girl, who wants to "look good, but not too much", I sensed in her an impossibility that had to be played out. In one class, as numerous girls muttered about being stared at by the boys in the hallways, some of them started accusing others of "dressing like sluts" or "wanting to show their breasts off." The contradictions and ambivalences in their discussions were numerous. Many female students felt this was an important problem in the school, and others joked casually about it. I sensed a strong will among the girls to do something about "being leered at a lot of times," but an inability to develop strategies to end this kind of behavior. Perhaps, given the right conditions (an impetus from school authorities, students coming forward), their social interest in this problem might be focused into a "situated agency" (p. 173) where action might be initiated.

Meanwhile, a definition of an "appropriate lean" for a guy proved rather elusive as the class pursued this avenue of discussion. What I was aware of was the gradual withdrawal of more and more students from the discussion. Was their silence a signal of weariness? Or was this an indication of the erasure that students were trying to avoid - the erasure of their subjectivities that were being gradually occluded by the discussion? The energy to come up with a group definition of this transitive thing we called *sexual harassment* waned from us. Britzman reminds me of this tendency to move toward closure in the classroom. But this tendency fails "to acknowledge identities as overburdened with the contradictions of our time in sites that push everyone toward unitary and stable meanings" (Brtizman *et al*, 1991, p. 88). This overburdening became more obvious as the silence crept upon me and seemed to ask, "time to move on?"

For the film, *Dying to be Thin*, the students were asked to respond to the questions that followed the pregression chart. (See *Progress and Pregress* in Appendix C 2 and *Dying to be Thin: A Case Study In Pregression* in Appendix C 3). What I emphasized was the possibility that "pregression" might be a way of talking about the way many of us feel about contradictions in our own lives and understandings about the world. Simply put, while there are often very positive developments in the world, often times there are negative or neutral developments as well. "It is difficult to predict what the outcomes will be - perhaps we need a new way to talk about the way change takes place. That way or that word might be *pregress*." With this introduction, I thought the film *Dying to be Thin* would introduce to the students the contradictions that modernism invites - that women have been invited to choose, *but that choice is framed in very particular ways that are simultaneously positive, negative, or neutral.*

Dying to be Thin claims that there is a profound body politics in western society that is a

misogynist one. The film presents the assertion that women have little choice about the shape they can present their bodies in for "the gaze" of the world. The fashion industry is singled out as a repressive instrument of this misogynist interpolation on women's bodies. A poignant moment in the film occurred when an effeminate model agent chatters on in what seemed to fit into the stereotyped image many students had of the gay fashion designer. The agent laments, "my heart just pounds when I see the perfect model" - students ate this up. In each of the three viewings of the film, several male students muttered "fag" and many others shifted around in their seats to exchange whispers and gestures.

I read the student's reaction to this stereotype of a modeling agent perhaps as an indication of what Brown may have meant by the social matrix of discourse; "the realities to which symbols refer are also symbolic - that is... they are intended by human actors and within some shared frame of vision" (Brown, 1989, p. 118). The students take up "fag" as a powerful marker that congeals their sense of solidarity positioned against the Other. On the other side, the modelling agent takes up his own markers to position himself (the high pitched nasal voice, the limp wrist) against 'male' codes of behavior. I wonder about the selection of the effeminate modeling agent by the film's producer. Does the effeminate behavior crafted by the film's producer as displayed by the modeling agent (who "would die" for a "perfect model"), play into the uncritical repetition of a "faggot" performance that undermines other possibilities for opening up what it means to be gay? Through their titters and crass comments, several students *write in* their meanings on the images on the film, they see this portrayal as "an original", as an expression of gay behavior (thus their use of the marker "faggot"). Watching a couple of students attempt to parody "the faggot" as the Other reinforced for me, Butler's notion of "postures as an imitation" that act as repetition to constitute and institute gender (1990, pp. 138-140). I was struck by the similarity in which students in all three classes, at precisely the same point in viewing the film, and with great fluidity employed the "faggot" Other as a performative trope. Yet as I consider Butler I wonder if I am not falling into the same trap (trope) as the students. Am I assuming that the behavior of the "faggot" is not a copy of another copy - the appropriation of culturally assigned performance given to women *as theirs?* (Here I am referring to the high pitched voice, the smacking lips, and the gleeful joy of "just dying" for a perfect model.) As well, what of the film producer's role in presenting this interview in the film?

Butler reads the body not as a "being", but rather as a "variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated, a signifying practice within a cultural field of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality" (Butler, p. 139). The signifying practice that Butler speaks about is a vigorous one as I recall the students acting out - parodying the "faggot" Other. Theirs is both a vigorous performative style (Butler's sense of *style* is being appropriated here) and a vigorous acting out of being themselves in the world. As I watched groups of students in

three classes enthusiastically repeat the same parodic performance through three separate viewings of the film, I read these performances as public actions that attempted to maintain gender identities in a "binary frame" as Butler suggests. The effeminate modeling agent displayed attributes that had to be reconstituted and reaffirmed as *not male*, but as *abhorrent*. What struck me most was the fact that not a single female student attempted to parody the modeling agent - they looked on and either ignored the males or laughed at their performances.

So we are in the world through language. But how we choose to use language and how we respond to its use by others is *political*. As I think about the classes that day, I sense what Brown might have meant about language as an *advocacy of reality* or "persuasive symbolization " (Brown, 1987, pp. 97-117). But this advocacy or persuasiveness in the viewing of *Dying to be Thin* was something practiced by some of the males and none of the females. I was struck however by how few students really "joined in" the act of finding humor in "the faggot." Among the ones who did, I sensed a confidence that their insults had public legitimacy that would not be challenged.

Rod and I chose not to raise the issue with the students and the possibility that their responses might have been inappropriate and hurtful. As I read Rod's comments, I wonder if we took the event seriously enough? As white heterosexual males doing 'our job' (of research), are we not caught in a different series of desperately unethical subversions of getting on with the class and our research? Indeed, as Hutcheon reminds me, any critique in the postmodern condition of our involvement and that of our students, is always "complicitous" (1989, p. 151). So we let the "faggot" comments go by and continue on with our project. So in review of Monday's work I am left wondering about my complicity as a teacher, researcher, and colleague of Rod's. I tried to frame this text as deconstructing my activities this week, to disclose how we, as subjects with desires, functioned as action researchers. I am cautioned by the modernist trope of trying to get things to *congeal* as Caputo so wonderfully frames it (1987, p. 216). What mobilized me to question the students' response to the "faggot" modeling agent in *Dying to be Thin*? As I sit as an invited guest in the classroom, now writing about the students, do I position myself as on the front-line of a liberation movement to free homosexuals from a homophobic adolescent sub-culture? What gives me the legitimacy to write about others this way? What new cleverness has been invested in me by the university and the rubric of action research?

Years ago I claimed a place as a "transformative intellectual" that sought to open up questions and the possibilities for critiquing dominant reproductive relations in society. At a symposium in Red Deer, Alberta, in 1986 I recall standing in front of fellow educators naively invoking Aronowitz and Giroux and their call to arms for "transformative intellectuals" (1986). What strikes me now as I look back to that presentation and reflect on the events of this week, is how silent I was about the ethical difficulties that such work throws us into. I acknowledged the

contradiction in working in an institution that is part of the hegemony that reproduces inequality and repression. Yet there was a largely unexplored assumption that I myself have not been subjected to this hegemonic power. My project was that of "understanding how power is articulated and expressed in the schools - whose interests are being expressed and ignored?" For me in 1986, power existed *out there*, radiating from outside, I simply had to show the students where to look. I read back my naivety about finding hegemonic power as "something out there". Lather explodes this construction of this hiding behind the trope of "vanguardism" and "the emancipatory impulse" (Lather, 1991a, p. 163). Absent are my own encounters with power and situation, my own complicity as a subject "enmired" in discursive practice (Butler, 1990, p. 143). So the students' abusive comments about the "faggot" slide by. So much for the "transformative intellectual".

Given my previous 'confessional tale' (Van Maanen, 1988), can I imagine a continuity in this paper as it unfolds as nothing more than a hybrid of intertextual play between the multiple subjectivities engaged in what is framed as an action research project? In any narrative can there be beginnings or endings? Perhaps there can only be as Britzman, suggests, "rejoinders" (1991, p. 96). Ellsworth reminds me about the danger in the reading of texts, for they are multiply situated and fragmented and highly conflictual (Ellsworth, 1989). To assume that there is a "liberating" *correct* reading that the students *must be freed* to enjoy, positions them in language and praxis, as recipients of an agency that erases their difference from mine. As Grossberg outlines affect as that which powers difference (Grossberg, 1992, p. 105), I must examine my authority in problematizing this investment with the students. I will take this up as a larger issue in action research in the concluding chapter.

As the film proceeded I was also struck by the reaction of the students to the contrasting images of women portrayed. The models used to characterize the ideal women were juxtaposed to the women interviewed as academic culture critics. What was striking about the women interviewed, who were offering commentaries on the problems of 'dying to be thin', was that almost without exception, they were full-figured women who, as one male student commented "look like my mother". I did not notice this coded juxtaposition until a student pointed it out - and asked if this was done deliberately. This is a significant point because of the divergent reaction to these women by the students. As Rod notes in his read back (April 19), "the guys were riveted to the film when the models were on but came up with crass comments when the obese people were on." The girls on the other hand, "were much quieter when the fat people were on and too concerned about the skinny models." I noted in the three classes a real silence descending over the females when the images of both the models and the female commentators appeared. I asked the classes about this reaction. Their reaction was almost universally, "we didn't notice that". I challenged the male students in one class, "why were there so many snickers

and crude comments when the large women were on the screen - and virtual silence when the models were on?" There was much shifting back in chairs and unease. They acknowledged what had happened after a few of the girls pointed it out as well (Block C). I felt uncomfortable pushing the issue with them. Did the class think we were setting them up for some experiment, carefully dissecting their behavior? At the same time I sensed both Rod and I and the students may have had our discussion scripted by the film's producers who played this series of binaries for us: *skinny/model/anexoria* contrasted to *fat/academic/intelligentsia*. Was it coincidence or intention that virtually all the social commentators in the film were full figured women? As one female student commented, "skinny people can be smart too."

I am tempted to lapse into a Foucauldian analysis of this moment in my discussion with the class. Were we being 'worked' by the film's producers? Was there a sense on their part that encoded in the viewers, would be various predetermined reactions to the contrasting images of women? What was powering the coalescing of the class discussion on this point? Why had I chosen to pursue this particular line of questioning this way? Why were Rod and I both so simultaneously struck by the difference in the reaction of the students?

Referring to the social critics interviewed on the film , a female student wondered out loud - "is every university-type fat?" The question raised by the student hovered over the class as I sat there thinking of a response. To write about this question now, perhaps I need to employ what Shapiro imported from Foucault with a "metaphorics of scripting rather than conversation" (1989, pp. 139-165). Would Foucault ask: what produced this student's question? What layers of meanings and discursive practices made this discussion in the class *available* to both the teachers and the students? How was the question by the student *scripted* by the action research, by the codes deployed by the film, by the sedimented layers of discursive production that opened this question? In Foucault's sense of this moment, perhaps there can be no truth to mask or unmask.

So I quickly responded in frustration and without much thought, (from a script of a male trying to be sensitive to women?) "no, not every social critic looks like the women on the film". The student seemed unconvinced. What was telling was that I wanted to give this response, I wanted to displace the film's and the students' prefigured notions of body shape and lifestyle with my own subjectivity, carefully framed as *mindfulness* and *sensitivity*. The student was again, figured in my response, as someone who needs to receive "the truth". Why did not I simply ask the student what he thought? Why did I not ask the student if he knew women who were 'university types and not fat'? I remained frustrated by the film's performance setting off the skinny models as "uncritical" and the fat ladies as "critical".

The student's illusory sense probably continued because of the film's coding of the *skinny-airhead/fat- intelligent* binary. Perhaps intertextuality helps understand the fashioning of

these codes. Intertextuality supposes that audiences bring to their viewing of texts "a compendium of other stories, meanings" (Britzmann, 1991, p. 92). Media operates to prepare its audiences to receive the message - out of the chaos of meanings that can be brought to signifiers, "a restoration of familiarity" is attempted to create order from what seems "the chaos of the new". There stands for me out of the film (from the sense from many students that they were "worked over by fat ladies") an attempted alignment of markers that implied "good women get their act together and don't worry about their weight". Are these "good women" the full-figured academics?

Dying to be Thin proved to be a fruitful ground for the students to work through the issues raised in the *Progress and Pregress* exercise. By offering a reading of the film through Gergen's notion of "pregression", both Rod and I saw a possibility for challenging ourselves and the class to share our understandings of what on the surface appears to be straightforward concept in societal change - *progress.* Progress as a trope of modernity, attempts to invest within our life-world a "systematic blinding" to labels given to changes taking place around us - industrial growth, the rise of diversity in consumer choices, the growth of individualism, to name a few. Gergen's work has allowed me to concretize my own understanding of postmodernity, and I read his treatment of "pregression" as a way of breaking out of the modernist discourse that attempt to frame progress as positive, hindered or pestered by certain 'disadvantages'. As we discussed in class, there can be no going back in modernity. The "Progress and Pregress" activity this week represents some of this re-reading of modernity's promises.

As you might read in the student handout, progress tantalizes with an embedded sense of "the good" without questioning the problematic outcomes or effects of this definition in our lived experience. I read Gergen as attempting to talk about the effects of discursive practices in terms of their ability to occlude or displace the lived problematics of experience. Importantly, Gergen does not offer "pregression" as a critique of progress, but as a deconstructive tactic that can be imported into the trope of modernist discourse. As I found in working with the students, reading *Dying to be Thin* through pregression, allowed us to question the grand narratives of progress for women as enmired with contradictory and conflictual effects of discursive practice. There emerged, a recovered intelligibility for talking about progress for one group in society.

Referring to the student handouts (Appendix C 2, C 3) offers a sense of how Rod and I framed *Dying to be Thin* with the students. After reviewing the chart with the students, we asked them to respond to the first three questions on the assignment sheet. The student responses were informally discussed. What struck me was the readiness with which the students used the terms "modernism" and "meaning systems" (inserted in questions 1 and 2). Students felt comfortable with these terms because the film so concretely demonstrated them in the lives of women. For example, the film mentioned that in 1954 the average model weighed 132 pounds, while in 1980

the average model weighed 117 pounds. It also pointed out that the average model in 1954 weighed 8% less than the average female, compared to 1980 where the average model weighed 25% less than the average female. The students had little difficulty in seeing that "ideal weight" was something circulated through the media. "The body to die for" became, for the students, something they saw as constructed - several students pointed to the statistic raised in the film that 75% of women in Canada believed themselves to be overweight, and that in 1990 in California, 84% of grade four girls had already been on a diet. Yet many students commented, "yeah, but being thin still looks better". Another remarked, "I'd rather be skinny than fat". There were awkward moments, one girl shot back angrily, "but sometimes you can't help it if you're born that way". She was referring to herself obviously, and the class fell silent. This was a turning point in the conversation in that class, one student remarked, "I guess that is what the film was saying - we should stop trying to fit into a mold because we are different". One girl remarked, "the point is not if you are fat, whatever that means, but if you feel fat - the film is saying most girls are made to feel shitty by the ideal image".

Of the discussions we had so far, the issue of weight was one that sparked student interest the most. Clearly for most students, their appearance to others and the construction of "ideal body type" stands as an area of great affective investment. For these students, the real power over difference, the *difference that matters*, is weight and appearance. What was striking was the interest of both the male and female students in this topic. Yet the body remains for social studies an unexplored site for understanding the articulation of power in society. Subsequent chapters will explore some of the potential for this in refraining *politics*.

In question 3, students were asked to identify possible changes in the political, economic, or cultural systems that might have contributed to the narrowing of what was to be deemed an acceptable body shape. Students suggested the role of the media in shaping the 'new freedom' that women had (jobs, money, choices to control their own bodies). We discussed these points. We discussed the question - "who decided that these body shapes were desirable?" (I sensed again my tendency to situate power as something out there - rather than something that we produce, circulate and recontextualize as we live.) What interested me was the comment that "no one decided - everyone wants it all". I asked the student to explain. "Well, the "superwoman" in the film was great wasn't she - she looked good, had a career, and a family." Another student jumped in, "yeah, doing everything well means you never need to choose what to be." Another student commented, "who would not want to have a great body, money, intelligence and tons of friends. No one wants to choose to be fat, or poor".

There seemed to emerge a cultural agnosticism in what this student was saying - to choose is to have to fight between options (between signs of signification). In this sense of 'agnosticism', I am using Selya Benhabib's treatment of Lyotard's polytheism and agnostics of language

(Benhabib, 1990, pp. 112-113). (It was Lyotard's claim that "to speak is to fight, in the sense of playing, and speech-acts fall within the domain of general agnostics".) There is in Lyotard's sense, a "polytheism of values" embedded in the student's statement that "doing everything well means you never need to choose."

There is here for me, also a sense of the need for a cultural agnostics in action research, where the messy terrain of students caught in the binaries of choice, *choose often not to choose.* This is a bit of Grossberg's sense of a cultural studies that reads the fabrication of daily life in the postmodern as the construction of places into new places (Grossberg, 1992, p. 109). These new places are places that people can occupy that are embedded with contradiction and ambiguity. I refer here to the students' agnostic appropriation in the postmodern sea of signs that make available to them the polymorphous identities that can be called upon so vigorously. "Superwoman" is one such identity that many of the girls take up.

Question 4 was introduced to the students as something to consider while completing the pregression chart activity. We wanted the students to re-read *Dying to be Thin* through Gergen's conception of "pregression". As the quote in question 4 indicates, central to their reading of Gergen and *Dying to be Thin* was the metaphor of "a lifetime struggle toward a summit never to be attained" (quoted in student handout, Appendix C 3). Gergen frames the "lifetime struggle" as a "game" that generates a sense of futility and failure often times. What I wanted to avoid is imposing Gergen's reading (from the "academic habitus") as *truth.* What I struggled for was to create an opportunity for them to read *Dying to be Thin* within a language game that allows us to temporarily engage the film together. This language game also presented to me a *practical entanglement* with the unit of study that two of Rod's classes had been working on - a study of industrialization in the nineteenth century as part of the Social Studies 20 curriculum. I offer *practical entanglement* as a way of expressing a difficulty of moving between the academic habitus and the student habitus. Living in the distance between, constructing a space where action is possible is my formulation for the *practical entanglement.* I read from Fiske, the need to construct a "conjunctural process" (1992, p. 163) in cultural studies. This process, or practical entanglement, involves a temporary language game that allows us to intersect vectors of our affective investment and signification (the feelings and meanings) we bring to the project.

As the handout Appendix C 3 indicates, the students were asked to complete a Pregression Chart based on the film. The detailed structure for their charts was outlined as below. Rod and I broke the students into groups of three and four, separating the male from females. We informed the classes that we were interested in noting both their understanding of the concept of "pregression" and whether or not it was helpful for them in interpreting the film. With each class we discussed what might be a useful concept to start off their charts (as per Gergen's model.) We agreed that "women's equality" might work. We suggested breaking down the assignment as

follows.

Progression		**Pregression**
women's equality	increased freedom	Identify elements that you feel fit below based on *Dying to be Thin.*
		Student responses in each of these categories:
		physical freedom _____
		sexual freedom _____
		economic freedom _____
		political freedom _____

The students worked on the charts for the next class and presented them in the following class on Tuesday, April 20. In discussing the charts with the students we pointed out that this would be a practice run for reviewing the film *Grand Canyon*. For this reason, we stressed, their understanding of how to use this approach to reading the film was important. We explained that they would be exploring a film that raises many of the issues Gergen does in his pregression analysis of our present lives as modernity begins to unravel. The following represents a summary of the students charts:

> *Physical freedom:* anorexia, cosmetic surgery and its threat to health, false images of what it takes to have a good body, diet pills, crash diets that lead to higher weight later, body politics(the body of women is fought over - as one student said, "no matter how I look - I get labeled... sometimes it seems that you either look like a slut or a goof"), stereotyped bodies.
>
> *Sexual freedom:* STD, unwanted pregnancies, sexual assaults going unreported, more sexual assaults than before (women are more visible and therefore more vulnerable), peer pressure to conform to an image, promiscuity.
>
> *Economic freedom:* unemployment and underemployment (women were promised jobs but as one student said "these are the shits" usually), less time for personal interests, less time for family, parents neglecting children (women and men cannot agree on who is responsible for child care so it does not get done adequately), more 'home alone kids'.
>
> *Political freedom:* men jealous of women's power, men feel threatened and insecure, women who take the lead to change things get in trouble, lesbian rights (one male student thought conferring such rights was a problem), to be first in anything is threatening, affirmative action causes division in society, having rights is o-k as long as you do not exercise them (one student remarked, "I can drink if I want to at a party but I better not get too drunk or else I'm called a drunk or a sleeze-box", another student commented, "yeah, we can have sex but not with anyone else").

As Rod and I discussed the charts with the students, it became clear throughout the day that several recurring themes emerged. The points raised by the female groups differed in that the girls gave numerous personal examples and comments that supported the issues raised by the film and the pregression of their "rights". This was especially obvious during discussion of the themes of sexual and political freedoms. The girls presented numerous examples from their own experiences, commenting on the contradictions they see regularly in school, at work, and in their social lives (e.g. at parties). There were numerous comments about parties, where as one girl suggested, "everything happens so fast." For the females, looks and behavior seem to be under constant surveillance. Several girls commented about this in class. One recurring example was the issue of drinking - "guys can get drunk but we can't" as one girl suggested. (I overheard one male student mutter, "girls drink like fags anyway".)

Running throughout the discussion of the chart was the difference in intensity that the girls brought to the assignment. This did not surprise Rod and I given that the males were talking about women's (the other's) experience with pregression, whereas the girls choose quite often to import their own experiences to the assignment. Numerous times I heard the male students say "they" and "women" referring to the film, where the females ignored many examples from the film and talked about their own experiences. Running through these examples was a frustration with the difficulty of living the promises of freedom. One girl struck a chord with the girls in the class when she stated, "yeah, I'm always too skinny for my mom, too fat for myself, too shy, too fast." Another girl playfully commented "yes, I'm too sexy for my car, too sexy for my shoes" (an obvious reference to the popular song *I'm Too Sexy* by Right Said Fred). Another girl moaned, "yeah - too whatever". I recall the image of the girls swaying back and forth in their chairs chanting "I'm too sexy" as Rod and I were attempting our 'serious' questions.

Donna Haraway's call for an "infidel heteroglossia" comes to mind (1990, p. 223). (Should I playfully substitute infidel for infantile?) Here were these young women paradoxically chanting a parody (was I living in Baudrillarian simulacra?). As a Haraway suggests, "the regrown limb can be monstrous, duplicated, potent". This is the stuff of a situated knowing where the affect powers a response, a resistance to being enclosed. As a male middle-aged teacher doing 'serious research', could I do nothing but sit and gaze upon those who, like Haraway, would rather be cyborgs than goddesses?

Reflecting on Tuesday's class, the inter-play between *Dying to be Thin* and pregression worked effectively. The student generated category of *women's equality* to use in completing the charts was most helpful. Several students mentioned that without this initial classroom guidance or framing, the chart would have been quite difficult. As one student mentioned, "there were so many different places to start from in the film". I read back to these classes a practical entanglement taking place when we agreed to explore a common transitive concept - *women's*

equality. This was not intended by Rod or myself - it emerged in the classes as one way of doing the task.

Exploring *Grand Canyon*

Following discussion of the charts, in the second half of Tuesday's classes, I introduced the students to the film *Grand Canyon* and the assignment sheets that we would be working on in the next three days. Both Rod and I emphasized that *Grand Canyon* was a possible extension and exploration of Gergen's notion of pregression and their understanding of how complex change can become. For a description of these assignments see the *Grand Canyon Assignment* (Appendix C 4). Assignment One was to serve as an introduction to the film, as a way of framing it in terms of both Gergen's pregression analysis and the Social Studies 30 Program of Studies. As we explained to the students, they were to explore the films as a potential commentary on the collapse of the ideals and promises of the modern city.

The linkage between Gergen and Lawrence Kasdan's 1991 film is one that I wished to explore as a postmodern curriculum entanglement. In my first viewing of *Grand Canyon* I was struck by the film's sense of disarticulatedness in the postmodern condition. I read the film at two levels. One reading shared Mike Davis' sense of Los Angeles as a "junkyard of dreams" (1990). In this framing, Los Angeles represents the entropy and fragmentation that emerges out of the collapse of the modernist illusory promise of the urban metropolis at the zenith of late capitalism. *Grand Canyon* offers a bleak view of the imploded *urban polis*, an oxymoronic creation that was extruded out of the modernist promise of "urban(e) living". *Grand Canyon* presents to me in this reading, a sober reminder of the seductive power of the modernist grand narrative. In its hollowness Los Angeles, framed in *Grand Canyon*, has become a shell in which individuals struggle to bring affect and meaning to the promises of modernity. L.A. has become a "gigantic agglomeration of theme parks" that are constructed to appear to provide "fantastic freedom of choice" (Soja, 1989, p. 235). Situated within this reading of Los Angeles, *Grand Canyon* offers the potential for a postmodern curricular exploration for the Social Studies 30 concepts identified in the student assignment sheet (e.g. justice, personal choices, economic choices, individualism). This assignment engages Gergen's notion of pregression as a way of inquiring into the broken promises of modernity. Framing Los Angeles, as a "junkyard of dreams" is a cross- reading of the promise that women are given in the discursive formation of "the body to die for" in *Dying to be Thin*. In my reading of *Grand Canyon*, Los Angeles has fulfilled its own prophetic formation - it has shown itself as a city of angels, but within this trope live angels of death and life.

Gergen's pregressivity offers a curricular engagement by showing a way to talk about Social Studies 30 terms such as *human rights, justice, individualism, security* as concepts that open opportunities for simultaneous contradictions and conflictual developments. Los Angeles, as *the*

City of Angels, represents a similar discursive formation and text upon which I gaze with the students in *Grand Canyon*. The City of Angels and the promise of "the body to die for", have been inscribed on us. As Claire , a character in the movie, states, "everything seems so close together... the good and the bad stuff." This is the rich antinomy of Gergen's postmodern pregression analysis - that embedded within the promise is the curse; intertwined with "the good" is "the bad".

Grand Canyon positions a series of characters whose lives in Los Angeles have become overburdened with difficulties. Mack, an immigration lawyer and his wife, Claire, are living out a strained marriage. Their friend, Davis, is a producer of violent grade B films who questions his work after going through the trauma of being robbed and shot. Simon, a tow-truck driver struggles trying to make a living and support his deaf daughter who lives in another city. In the meantime, Simon's sister lives in a violent neighbourhood with her teenage son who is being caught up in gang violence. So as the film opens, we see Mack enjoying a Lakers' basketball game. Mack stares at beautiful young women, enjoys the game - life is good. On his way home he is confronted by black hoods who threaten to rob and kill him. Within seconds (the angel?) Simon arrives to rescue Mack. "The neighbourhood is gone to shit" offers Simon. Mack replies, "This country is gone to shit". The film ends with Mack and Simon bringing their families to the canyon. The credits role as the camera provides a sweeping panorama as the viewer is dropped into the gorge below. This is a coding of *Grand Canyon*, as "the shit" of L.A. is set against the ambiquity and promise of the Grand Canyon.

My reading of *Grand Canyon* opened the possibility of exploring with the students an intersection of key concepts from the Social Studies 30 curriculum. The first step was the introduction of the assignments. The first involved a group activity - creating a Pregression Chart based on the film. The second involved a a series of options ranging from essays, poems, a rap song, an autobiographical or biographical anecdote, or a photo or video essay. Each of these options was to explore the themes that emerged for the students from the film in relation to the nodal points identified from the Social Studies 30 curriculum. From Tuesday, April 20 to Thursday April 21, the students viewed the film *Grand Canyon*. Rod's read-back includes observations and comments on the student's viewing of the film.

The following brief summary of the student charts (see Appendix C 5) are listed below. Refer to Rod's read-back for April 22 (Appendix C 1) for an exploration of student comments about the charts and the student comments about the film.

Sample #1	Personal Choices: Focuses on the right to choose for yourself.
Sample #2	Human Rights: Focuses on the promise of increased freedoms and rights for the characters in the film.
Sample #3	Urbanization: Focuses on the promise of diversity, growth at several levels.
Sample # 4	Family awareness: Focuses on the promise of 'freer families'.

These samples represent the range of themes that students selected to explore *Grand Canyon* in a cross-reading with Gergen's pregressivity. Themes from other student work not included in the Appendix included *changing conditions, safety, the role of the police, moving to L.A.,* and *power.* The samples provided in the Appendix represent the most frequent themes students selected. The students presented their Pregression Charts in class on Thursday, April 22. Following their presentations, Assignment Two was reviewed. Students were given until the following Wednesday (April 28) to complete their projects. After feedback from students on Monday (April 26) it became apparent that more time would be needed (i.e. to allow for film processing, editing of videotapes). As well, the next stage of our action research had been delayed because of the questions raised by some parents about the use of the next film *Pump Up the Volume!* I had been requested to attend a meeting of the school board (on May 5). This would mean pushing back the next cycle of our work about two weeks. (This issue will be further explored in Chapter 6.) The students welcomed the extended deadline.

Students Creating a Grand Canyon

On Friday, April 30, the students in the three classes presented their completed projects. As the student handout indicates, there was a broad range of work completed. Most students opted for photo or video essays, while many wrote poems. As the samples indicate, a common theme was indeed, "everything is different than the way it's supposed to be." Many students commented that this theme opened a variety of choices for them on which to comment on personal and local experiences that paralleled those of the characters in *Grand Canyon.* Only a few written samples of the rich variety of student work can be included in this report. Given formatting and duplicating limitations, photo, video and audio presentations are not included in the Appendix, but are available for review.

As the presentation proceeded on Friday, April 30, the work that had taken place the week previous was obviously coming to fruition. An emerging question engaged each of the three classes that day as we talked about the seeming negativity in the presentations. Students commented again and again on the "junkyard of dreams" theme as describing many of their experiences in Greystone. At one point Rod and I stopped the class and asked, "things are not that bad here are they? If so, how many of you plan on staying in Greystone after you complete your schooling? Will any of you come back after completing your post secondary education?" Only three students out of 75 indicated that they would indeed consider returning to Greystone. Rod and I pursued this point with the classes after the students indicated that there were lots of opportunities 'out there' for them. When pressed about the rising unemployment rates and problems in other population centers, students agreed that perhaps they were being a little hard on Greystone - "maybe it's not any more a junkyard than other places," one student laconically

commented. Yet I was struck by their enthusiasm for leaving the community - as one student commented in a moment of robustness, "look, about 90% of us will go on to university or something... we are not going to hang around here." (Neither Rod or I challenged this over-estimation of post secondary attendance patterns of students from Greystone.)

Another recurring theme that emerged from the student presentations was their use of "they" and "them" to describe those responsible for creating the problems identified in the projects. A typical example is one student who blamed "the mill" for all the pollution in the town. When asked who would possibly help clean-up the mill the student replied "the environmentalists, they'll do it." Another student, showing pictures of litter at a local lake, remarked, "they shouldn't throw stuff around." One photo of the school grounds was displayed and a student asked "who does this stuff?" Again and again throughout the day Rod and I watched and participated in discussions about "other people" who pollute, ignore social problems, and who let the town become a "junkyard of dreams." Like Frankenstein, the constructed *other*, or Kristeva's *stranger*, is the one to resent, since it is *we* who create it by the exclusions we bring to our construction of ourselves. This is modernity's condition (Kristeva, 1993, pp. 16-17).

The student projects represent a rich variety of seeing the community. One student remarked when reporting on her photo essay, "I noticed after doing this project that things look pretty nice from far away, but ugly close up." This struck me as a fractal sensitivity that several students picked up on in their work. One student commented on a local project to create a bird nesting ground at a nearby lake. "When I looked really close at Red Lake, past the nice trails and the signs, I noticed rusting barrels and garbage in the lake." One video featured panoramic shots of locations in the town, contrasted to close-ups. One dramatic transitional shot showed the Greystone River contrasted to a growth of algae downstream from the local kraft mill. Several of the poems and stories included in the Appendix (C 6 to C 8) convey this fractal sensitivity. (See for example "Junkyard of Dreams" (C 7) and "Scum" (C 8). Particularly powerful in "Junkyard of Dreams" is the student's sense that identity is continually being written into us as individuals who struggle to resist labels. These labels and expectations serve "to cut a person down", writes the student. There is an ambivalence about her two anecdotes - a sense that often times things turn "sour" but that "the negatives are not devastingly bad."

One female student's remark stays with me as I think about Friday's classes. "Doing the project with our camera was like looking at Greystone from the top - usually I look at it from the bottom." A sense of exasperation was evident in her voice - many in the class seemed to share her sense that the project let them look differently at what they see everyday. In this sense, the students remarked that although their projects seem overall to paint a gloomy picture of their local situation, "things aren't that bad really." There was a collective feeling in the three classes that the project "steered us to look only at the negatives." As one student remarked, " Greystone

is not L.A., our problems are not as big as theirs." Another student shot back, "yeah, but our little uglies are still ugly."

One last theme that recurred in the projects that needs attention is that of the "intensity" of urban life as contrasted to rural or small town life. Several projects focused on variations of the theme raised by the character Claire in *Grand Canyon*, "that everything is so close together." One video featured a collage of ten-second clips from current television programs with a sound over of the hit song by Aerosmith, *Living on the Edge*. Another photo essay contrasted urban life with rural life; the student presenter commenting that "urban is intense, rural is mellow." In both presentations the students remarked that so-called "personal choices" people make about their lives often end up being quite unintentional and unplanned. "Few people can predict the long term effects of the decisions they make" said one student. At the risk of over-determining the student work - it appears that they have a sense of the highly fractal nature of human agency and its inability to accomplish anything close to certainty. Again, I read-back to the recurring student comment, "close up things always appear different than what they seem." In the student work this can be read as referring to spatial and temporal 'appearances.'

Closing the Canyon

Grand Canyon ended our work in the second phase of the project. A number of observations need highlighting. Missing from my descriptions in this chapter, are the numerous students who took little or marginal interest in the project. Some students (surprisingly few, both Rod and I agreed), found the films and activities uninteresting. We felt the open-ended nature of the questions and the option of group work motivated many students. There were students who had no patience with the films and discussions. A few students agreed with one girl who said that "*Dying to be Thin* was about the jealousy of a few fat women". For these girls the attack by "fat women" on "beautiful bodies" was part of a chain of associations they constructed from the film. The equation for one girl was clearly articulated, "if they (the commentators criticizing models) are so smart why don't they figure out how to lose weight". Other students found *Grand Canyon* "boring"; or as one student remarked, "what does this have to do with Canada?" Clearly for some students the films did not engage them at all.

Yet the student work reviewed deserves attention in terms of its potential for the Social Studies 30 curriculum. In a small way perhaps, both my text (as framed by my action research reporting), and that of the students' (as presented in the Appendix and quoted throughout this report), reflects what Lather referred to as the "invested positionality" that shapes our "rhetoric and practice (Lather, 1991, p. xvi.). I read Lather's sense of shifting *positionality* as an undertow that helps to circulate the meanings and affect we bring to our work together. The undertow cannot be detected by those standing on the shore. This chapter on phase two of our action

research is one representation of two teachers and 75 students caught in the swirl of the undertow.

CHAPTER 5
PLANNING THE THIRD ACTION CYCLE

Mapping Possibilities for an Affirmative Affect

In mapping out the possibilities for the third and last week of our work with the students I return to my treatment of Grossberg's notion of "affective investment" from Chapter Three. So far, our activities have been driven by a concern for the objects of desire, or the so-called 'social issues' that may have drawn the affective investment of students. For example, Phase One engaged us in an exploration of drawing individual maps of our concerns and bringing them together. The review of the student questionnaire and the Quantum Leap assignment facilitated this contouring of our divergent readings of social issues. Phase Two involved a more directed and penetrating examination of issues surrounding the contradictions and ambiguities of modernism and how our seepage into a postmodern condition eludes coherent and intelligible meaning making about what the future holds for us. The third phase of our work turns to the life-world of students to explore a postmodern sense of politics and political action as highly situational. Within the limited forms that politics has been framed by the modernist discourse I wish to saturate this formation by drawing on the prolific maps or lived worlds that students inhabit.

The structuration of the experience of acting as a socially interested subject is full of difficulties. Firstly, I want to avoid the temptation to write about subjects from a perspective of identity politics; identity as something that is given (race, gender, class) or something taken up or appropriated. Kobena Mercer's archaeological rereading of "1968" and the struggles over the signs ("mantras") of race, class, and gender, illustrates the strategic rearticulation of identity that takes place in the complex polis of American society (1992). The eventual "political identity" that evolved over the metaphors of "Black power" leads Mercer to conclude that contradictions and antagonisms within identity politics are too easily papered over and erased. This reductionism and flattening out of the other has real strategic dangers associated with it - the ability of the Right to construct chains of equivalences that can be articulated against democratic reform (e.g. Powellism and the construction of the silent majority pitted against the minority).

The flattening of difference and the potential for the production and circulation of erasures such as "youth culture", is an Othering that I resist yet cannot escape from completely. In working toward new representations of politics I am caught in liminal areas where "new shapes, new kinds of action and responsibility" are called for (Haraway, 1992, p. 314). The situated knowing that Haraway speaks of is very much a part of Grossberg's project of working towards an understanding of politics as a strategic matter, where one decides continually if and how to act (1992, p. 389). It is in *the moment of deciding* that particular times and places can be explored with

students in a treatment of the culture of daily life as if it mattered, because it does to the actors involved. There is a hermeneutic turn in what I wish to construct in this chapter - the meaning and affective investment of finding pleasure and pain in acting as a socially interested subject. What follows will link the curriculum problem of the occlusion of politics that our action research is directed against and the situatedness of acting as an agent in the social world.

The problem of occluding meaningful opportunities for agency (either local or at wider levels) has been identified by Shapiro who explores Foucault's sense of how discourse acts to extrude power into the nooks and crannies of our lives: "This institutionalization of a state centered discourse incorporates a form of silence " Shapiro, 1992, p. 100). I see here a reading of the current Social Studies program that conveys the state constructed discourse to the students (through texts and teacher activities). Again, as from Chapter One, politics is almost always rarefied as *something done out there.* In the Program of Studies the depoliticization of certain spaces (homes, schools, workplaces), and the politicization of others (provincial and federal governments), privileges certain ways of seeing and talking about politics. This is the life for many of our students. As the discussion in Chapter Three during the first phase of the project indicated, many students resist being framed as "citizens in waiting". I offered the label "cynizen" to describe their resistance to being *written into* politics. An example of the coding of politics by the curriculum that positions the students as citizens "in waiting" is the use of the term in the curriculum "political and economic *system*." The semiotics of such a figuration serves to situate the student as Other within a structure of power and scarcity relations that is made to appear consistent and rational. The student (like many adults) is made to feel a need to 'fit' in the *system* - to integrate their subjectivity into a fictive rationality (troped as "the political *process*"). Being able to articulate the language of the various ideologies that play out their lives in these systems (e.g. socialism, capitalism) allows the student to write the Diploma Examination and (hopefully) pass the course. The codes that are produced and circulated already write the students' responses for them. This is a modernist project that is now imploding in our current program in Alberta social studies. Just as the Cold War ended and teachers wondered "what will we teach now?" nationalism and tribalism reared its head. Somehow the Other will be coded into new boundaries, or Others who can be written into new codes will be delivered unto us from on high (the Curriculum Branch).

What is needed, pedagogically, in response to this trope of fictive rationality of *systems* and *processess,* is a strategic curriculum change that will offer an opportunity to regain student initiative as socially interested subjects who can act in constructed sites of their own possibility and making. This will involve a reading of student experiences (particularly those of females) within both a local sense of a self-other relation, and the attempts by students to overcome being silenced as richly described by Massing (1992) who explores the difficulty for women of speaking

up. In the latter part of this chapter, what I will offer as a curricular possibility, is the exploration of *talking hard,* (drawn from the movie *Pump Up the Volume!*) as an allegorical postmodern response to the experience of being made to feel silenced. What I am seeking here is a de-centering tool that seeks what Chang called "the potential for developing a communicative self" (1991, p. 311). Chang's sense of *self* is one that draws on an eclectic methodology , drawing on social psychology and philosophy. I wish to draw into this mix the phenomenological sense of doing philosophical thinking at the site of "personal engagement" described by van Manen (1991, p. 154). By drawing upon a phenomenological understanding of women's experience in *speaking up,* and appropriating the response of *talking hard,* I hope to offer a feminist postmodern curriculum response to the current oppressive social effects of the modernist state-centered discourse offered by the current Program of Studies.

From Foucault the postmodern poses for us a possibility of the student not as a "universal" intellectual of modernity, but as a "local and specific intellectual". As a possibility for action, this is framed by Jencks as "affirmative forms of resistance and resisting forms of affirmation" (1992, p. 69). Importantly, Kristeva and others, who have been critical of much of postmodernist writing, have called for a similar affirmative human agency by seeking out writing that intends to expand the "signifiable and thus the human realm." (Cited on p. 64). More recently Kristeva explores the notion of expanding our ability to cope with Otherness through the experience of 'the stranger' (Kristeva, 1993). Locating political agency in local sites is, by definition, a rejection of metanarratives such as "ideologies", and "citizens as rational decision-makers" (who inhabit the reified *state).* It is my argument that for students, this bogus embedded *social contractarianism* locates human bodies in a sea of signifiers that inscribe political and economic ideas as those that build for *Man,* rather than *people.* As a teacher, I need a site where a sense of situatedness and lived experience can be recovered.

Part of the construction of this site involves the critical distinction Grossberg (1992, p. 123) makes between having a social interest and investment as opposed to possessing *agency* or being an *agent*. For Grossberg, agency represents control over the influences or forces in one's life (e.g. such as in a business person lobbying the government for tax concessions, or relaxed environmental legislation). Agency becomes then, an effect of power relations in a society, "the actual forces producing the larger structures of articulation" (p. 397). Technology, capitalism, environmentalism, 'back to the basics' would be examples of long-term forces that determine or attempt to influence the form and shape of history. When actors or institutions attempt to shape these forces they are called agents, or said to be acting agentically. Framed this way, agency is the strategy that tries to reproduce more places where it can live (e.g. lobbyists trying to create a favourable climate for their interests by trying to fight anti-lobbying legislation, corporations advertising their concern for the environment). In short, to be an agent, there must be a place

(institutions, discursive practices) for agency to circulate. As de Certeau (1984) reminds us, those outside of the agentic circles in a society have no place to exercise agency, they are reduced to constructing temporary sites or interruptions in which they can act. Agency is also more complicated than 'having power', and 'acting', since agentic forces may act in ways that are contradictory or unintentional (e.g. pursuing one's national interest in acquiring nuclear weapons may lead to one's destruction as nations discovered in the arms race).

For Grossberg, those that have an affective investment in a site (e.g. people wearing T-shirts with a political statement, students as alternative music fans), are considered to be socially interested subjects, not agents. Spray painting walls does not constitute an agency, liminal sites of engagement offer temporary outlets for action but they generally have little effect on the forces of history. While there are some loose-ends in Grossberg's distinction between agency and social interest, I will develop this distinction with the work of the students and their affective investments.

The current curriculum can be read as a series of modernist tropes that exclude agentic responses from students. These are in our classrooms "linguistic maps" as Dilthey might read them (cited in van Manen, p. 177) that attempt to operate to transform, to enlighten, the *citizen in waiting* through classroom talk of 'political and economic systems' and 'public policy formation.' A re-reading of the curriculum guide and *Teaching Resource Manuals* reveals a modernist project that attempts to *write in* the students. (I am reading here citizen *in waiting* as a metaphor after the fashion magazines that construct images of women draped on seductive clothing, laying *in waiting* for a man. In this sense the student is gazed upon by Student Evaluation in the Diploma Examination - his/her *position* (test performance) being evaluated by the discourse of the Student Evaluation Branch .)

Teachers by and large have had this modernist discourse injected into their subjectivities. They have 'bought into the program' as the bureaucratic language frames it. I once got in an argument with a teacher who said that teachers highly valued the Diploma Exams as an educational tool. I countered that most teachers do not think the exams work very well, and that they would not be here marking if they were not paid the $18.00 per hour on top of what they already got paid by their boards. I asked 50 people informally over the next two days if they would mark without the $18.00 - getting only their expenses covered. No one said they would.

My point is this: students have been required to focus their attention and concern onto the "state" and other places constructed by modernism. The anxiety they as 'citizens in waiting ' are asked to internalize has also been variously transposed into a concern for the security of the "population", "the future", "the planet". My question is a pedagogical one: How can we construct such a tragic text for students? This is a text in Nietzschean sense of the "tragedy of the ass", that the subject can neither carry its load nor shed it. There is virtually no possibility of achieving

what Merleau-Ponty called "a direct and primitive contact with the world" (1962, p. viii), if the *world* that is offered to students is one that is disarticulated from daily life. How can there be human experience in reified notions of "state" and "party politics" for an adolescent? More particularly, Reginald Bibby finds a consistent withdrawal of teenagers from national level politics in his research. Three out of four students interviewed felt they had "too little power" to influence political decisions. As a sad irony to the modernist curriculum, 45 per cent said that they were interested in the serial slayings in Milwaukee, as compared to 13 per cent who expressed the same level of interest in the Spicer Commission (Bibby, 1991, p. 310).

Perhaps what Bibby's research points to is a form of psychic retreat where adolescents find comfort in the hyperreality of spectacle. Earlier in this chapter I offered *cynizens* as one reading of the impossibility many of our students found themselves in. More important, in terms of my inquiry, I sense the inability of students to connect with the *political world* mediated and coded by the press and television. As a teacher, can I know how students experience their experience of 'current events'? How can I have a pedagogic sense of being with students who are in the world, but *written in* the world by the phantasms of the popular media? I believe Neil Postman makes this point effectively in his appropriately titled book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death.: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (1985). Here I see the experience of media news as spectacle, limiting our work together in Social Studies 30. The limitations of student psychic reality and social reality will be explored later in this paper as a project of *mapping out limits*, of knowing what we can and cannot do.

Where, in the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment project was the protection of the popular sovereign (in a Hobbesian sense of the Leviathan), the political project of today's student or citizens *in waiting* is the protection and anxiety for the impossible "population" (sometimes constructed as *Man* or *society).* Again, as Shapiro suggests, there is an illusory collective constructed as a means of occluding individual subjectivity (1991, p. 125). There is a difficulty in this coded occlusion since discourse centered on strategic concerns for the "population", "the future", among others, acts to distance our students (and teachers) in two ways. First students are distanced in Fiske's sense of the division created between high and low culture (1992, p. 154). This distancing positions certain inquiries as legitimate (e.g. Why is there torture in authoritarian regimes?); while others are superfluous (e.g. Why have one in six girls in Canada been victims of incest?) (Report of the Canadian Panel of Violence Against Women, *Edmonton Journal,* Friday, July 30, 1993, p. A3).

A second distancing involves the attempted erasure for the students (and teachers) of their own fears and limitations. It is the function of the state centered political discourse to achieve representational distancing from our own limitations and fears - a sort of "burrowing" of student subjectivities results. Perhaps *cynizens* are the product of this circulation. Later in this paper,

this "burrowing" will be read as a threat to an authentic pedagogy that needs to deal with what Lasch sees as the tendency towards narcissism (1979). This narcissism might be seen as a way for young people to deal with the societal denial of their fears and anxieties. This denial, which takes as the effect of occluding a local politics and agentic postmodern praxis, gives impetus to adolescent defense mechanism that conceal a fragmented or fragile self. What I wish to explore then, is how these fragmented selves experience *being silenced*, and how a response might be framed in *talking hard*. What I will offer then is a reading of Massing's work and a postmodern response *(talking hard)* as a possibility for agentic action in the Social Studies 30 curriculum.

Living in the Limits: Women Speaking Up

From Foucault I owe the of understanding that while we live within the encoded subjugating limits established through discursive practices, we also can resist these, albeit through a fragmented, often subjugated local and specific knowledge (Philp, 1985, pp. 76-85). The problem Massing (1991) explores, based on educational research and the reported experiences of women, is that education in public schools seems almost universally to be an experience "by which girls move from a position of some advantage in the early years of school to one of disadvantage in later years" (p. 2). The exploration of this change requires researchers to explore the lived experiences of females within a phenomenological sense of what it means to construct an image of self in a school experience that situates males in a preferred position. Underscoring the research that indicates females have "a slight academic advantage" (p. 163) when they begin school, Massing draws in previous work that indicates that in subsequent school life, a sense of self-doubt gradually develops. This transformation is made obvious in such a way that by grade nine, girls seriously question their own abilities and are unwilling to take risks in the classroom setting. This reluctance to 'speak out' is ingrained in a school culture that is embedded with a commitment to rationality and that gradually marginalizes girls. This creates two problems for females. Firstly the ways of knowing that form the school experience increasingly denigrate epistemologies that are not 'value-free' and grounded on patriarchal discourse (objectivistic and disengaged). Secondly, girls become exclusively 'the ones that think this way', in the popular parlance. Thus gendered ways of knowing are recursively constructed with the girls becoming *the ones* that embody a marginalized way of being and knowing. The result is that girls are cultured not to become visible agents who assume control and try to change themselves or the social system that frames the discursive processes of subjects seeking to become selves (p. 164). This is everyone's loss since narrowing ways of knowing that "exclude passion from academia" (p. 173). deprives us of much knowledge and possibilities for becoming human.

The research that frames Massing's work is grounded on the lived experience of women in educational settings that reminds us as readers that education is something that is constituted as

a discursive practice. Unfortunately for girls, they are marginalized in this consitutive project. The irony for girls should not escape us as educators; how we construct our knowledge in schools is far removed from a life world where "women see themselves as constructors of knowledge" where they might be able to claim ownership of their experiences (p. 165). It is interpreting the experiences of girls in a hermeneutic-phenomenological sense that allows us to understand what it means to be "silent", how one positions one's self in "being silent", of not "speaking up" for one's "existence" and "capabilities". This research orientation is committed to opening up and exploring spaces; in a hopeful sense, it represents a commitment to emancipating voices that live in the interstices that erupt in a patriarchy that is slowing eroding. There is an explicit normative grounding in Massing's research that would be difficult to escape given her commitment to liberate, or give voice to overcome the silence. Important, from a pedagogical understanding of students' lived experience, any dialogical practice shares this moral grounding . The explanatory power of hermeneutic-phenomenological work lies in its potential to transform us as subjects becoming selves because it builds communicative competence - the essential ingredient Habermas would claim, to unpeeling the terrain that situates and determines our practice. Applied to educational settings, Habermas' work helps us to problematize the assumption in our structures of communication (Collins, 1991). Traditionally women thought of education as something they received, the change required is one where women will see education as something they will "act upon" as it acts upon them. There are important implications here for me as a teacher interested in understanding the experience of *being silenced.*

For women to be able to 'speak up' involves risk. Through the interrogation of women's experiences of 'speaking up' we see the richness of phenomenological research. Living in "ambiguous uncertainty" (p. 34) of oneself is nonsensical unless it is openly talked about, and written about, so that this experience can interpolated with the dominant discourse that seeks to push it aside. Writing about 'speaking up' is worthwhile; her last three chapters support this claim within the context of a conceptualization of power relations within society and the classroom that seeks to unpack opportunities for liberating opportunities for girls to claim " I Am" and "I Can" in their speech and knowing. One of Massing's conclusions is that without the emotional push to speak out, "the risk of speaking up presents an insurmountable barrier, keeping us in silence" (p. 166). Speaking out revolves, then, around "anger, frustration and indignation". The rich and deep descriptions of girls feeling intimidated and frustrated give the reader a sense of the "body pushing" the speech act. This sense of being pushed will be explored in the next section - *talking hard.*

Not surprisingly it is this strength to "speak up" that causes females to often times be seen to be "angry" or "emotional " (in a derogatory sense) by society. This is an experience many adolescents reported to me as well, in my discussions with them . Bibby's 'empirical' research

finds this too. When asked who they feel is most helpful in giving advice on "a major problem" , only 37 per cent of teens reported they would turn to their parents, while 48 per cent said they would turn to their friends. Only 2 per cent reported they would turn to a school counselor (1991, p. 172). What is important here is the reasons teens give for their reluctance: feeling that many adults do not understand their feelings, not trusting adults, and a sense that schools will "tell on us". For students lacking agency, 'the secret' remains an important tactic in maintaining sites for living.

A sense of power inequality is a theme that runs through Massing's unpacking of the risks of 'speaking up'. Accepting the need to locate more opportunities to reduce risk, is to acknowledge the power differential that always exists in the teacher-student relationship (p. 171). This is evident in grading practices, it is easier to grade large classes instructors report, "where you don't get to know the students". In the competitive world of grades, this tendency to try to "objectify" students reinforces the (patriarchal) epistemology that knowledge is constructed from the outside (p. 176). Citing the work of Miller, Massing explores how issues like competitive grading reinforce the role of the student learning - the role "of how to be a good lesser" (cited on p. 171). This is rich pedagogically - "the lesser" reminds me of the experiences teens report of the their school experiences. Tentativeness and nervousness are inextricable parts of the school experience. Massing does not claim these should lead us to remove all sources of tension (e.g. grades), but it should sensitize us to the largely unseen power differential that exists between student and teacher. As Miller's work reminds us - the 'lesser group', in order to survive, learns to recognize and respond to the needs of the dominant group more so than its own. In a sense the group becomes absorbed in the competitive and hierarchical culture of the classroom. It follows then that risk-taking becomes submerged in this life world of learning to be a 'good lesser'.

Perhaps this is where the hermeneutic quality of Massing's work becomes informed by a critical science orientation. Portraying women in stereotypical ways, excluding them from curriculum materials, and devaluing their experiences, are just a few of the research findings that Massing reviews (in Chapter 9) in order to establish the societal context of how women are 'silenced' in the classroom. This silencing then takes place within the context of structures that need to be unmasked. Massing acknowledges that this has been done by other researchers (e.g. Clarricoates, Brophy and Good, cited on p. 162). What emerges from Massing's interpretivistic work then, reflects the value or seeing behavior such as taking the risk to 'speak out', not as limited in some deterministic way that is constructed by patriarchy or other reified 'realities'. This is research that situates human behavior in the context of the meaning and symbols that people bring into situations. As Gage describes the interpretivistic research paradigm, we should get a sense that there is not just *action*, but *behavior plus meaning*, since "interpretive researchers regard individuals as able to construct their own social reality" (Gage, 1989, p. 5). Increasingly, since

1989, research orientations have bled together the interpretivistic and the critical, to allow for a more productive and ecumenical approach that critiques our lived experience and allows us to act on our moral obligation to improve education and society, when productive life " is all too often going desperately unrealized" (p. 10).

Massing claims the hermeneutic interview is a way of "finding meaning" through engagement and appraisal of themes that emerge in recorded anecdotes and experiences. Pivotal in this process is the hermeneutic conversation (p. 37). Conversations with five women clarified aspects of 'speaking up' that emerged from three years of field work . These included two hundred written accounts of experiences such as, "A Time I Spoke Up," and " A Time When I Wish I Had Spoken Up". Added to this were twenty journals from fourth and fifth year university students in early childhood education. The "sense- making" activity that the researcher is engaged in is one of "thick description" (after Geertz cited in Massing, p. 41) that seeks to tease out a definition and location of the experience of 'speaking out'.

Consistent with the hermeneutic tradition, Massing's work reminds us that we need to see classroom experience as a form of text, full of research possibilities for uncovering the causes of female silence. These range from inquiries framed in psychoanalytic theory that stresses links between biology ('internals') and language, to gender role theory which looks to externalties such as inscribed roles and institutions that shape possibilities for being *woman*. Between these two poles a rich variety of theoretical orientations reside. Massing claims she can construct a hermeneutic inquiry that is situated in all camps. In an attempt to generate a grounded theory, early in her work she cautions, "the overlay of theoretical perspectives seems premature" (p. 22); calling instead for a research design "which focuses upon direct experience, but which also takes into account the possibility of institutional control through gender roles and other regulatory mechanisms' (p. 21). There is a side-stepping of major modes of inquiry - Massing summarizes the contributions of psychoanalysis in two pages (see pp. 15-16) for example, and does not revisit psychoanalysis again. (It is curious that Massing cites key psychoanalytic writers such as Kristeva and Irigaray but does not include these in the bibliography. Indeed, a discussion of Lacan's work appears (p. 15), but none of Lacan's work is cited in the bibliography. Problematizing 'speaking out' is done within the "human sciences" approach of van Manen, and is presented as a methodological commitment to "penetrate the blanket of assumptions which shrouds" other forms of inquiry (p. 29). There is a sense of discipline, rigor and commitment to authenticity yet the cursory review of psychoanalysis is disconcerting.

The quantum leap over psychoanalysis is paralleled by the disregard for poststructuralism and the contributions it has made to feminist theory. While there is recognition that language is a male constructed limitation in recovering women's experiences, Massing does not introduce the issues raised by post-structuralism. The claim is made that "women are often in a position where

they have to translate in order to function in the male dominated society" (p. 31). So the trick for the researcher is to show meaning when the words get in the way. This is the point Heidegger made: "The actual interpretation must show what does not stand in the words and is nevertheless said" (p. 32). Yet without a sense of what deconstructionists warn us about, the problematics of language in generating meanings remain stubbornly resistant to interrogation. Massing has a bit of a sense of this when she expresses her concern for over-relying on written accounts because they tend to be excessively formalized - removed from the life-worlds of experience (p. 32). Yet as the dissertation proceeds, we see the power of the text taking over. Despite her wish not to essentialize women (pp. 16-20), the stories and analyses do just that. This is the seduction of text that deconstruction warns us about. Some examples illustrate the undertow we all need to swim across without being drawn in. The pervasive use of the collective pronoun "we" strikes the reader throughout the text. "As women, we become very accustomed to seeing ourselves through the eyes of others" (p. 110). "We distrust the freedom of an unrestrained and unadorned body" (88). Such claims assume a consistency in women's experience that is problematic.

As Martusewicz reminds us, the "*truth* of woman as provided us by science, philosophy, religion, and literature, indeed by culture itself, is an elaborate fiction Martusewicz, (1992, p. 141).*Woman* to the deconstructionist, is seen as "a category of thought." Research should not be tempted by the phenomenological canopy of a sense of *presence* of *women*. This is the strength and power of phenomenological writing - it privileges a way of thinking of *woman*, or any other quality, as if it was *the real*. This privileging of presence in a particular *logos*, is the trap Foucault warned against; "the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (such as gender) , reflects a "multiplicity of force relations (Foucault, 1988, p. 92-93). Of course this force relation is the privileged position of the academic researcher doing work that society highly prizes and rewards with academic honour and monetary awards. Consider Massing's claim that women being viewed as "decorative objects" creates dependency and subordination which women should resist (p. 110). Contrast this statement to Camille Paglia's claim that Madonna, through her overt sexual unmasking of puritanism and censorship, "is the true feminist" (1992, p. 4). Paglia admonishes mainstream feminists "to graduate from the Girl Scouts", to see their sexuality for what it is, for the "animality and the artifice" of erotic voice and body. Surely this would give Massing dyspepsia. At best her single reference to Foucault (p. 153) suggests a token appreciation for the power of text to inscribe and prescribe. To attempt a totalizing discourse about a decontextualized sense of *woman* seems a contradiction given Massing's commitment to give authentic voice to women in their life-worlds. Perhaps more attention to deconstructionist writing in her literature review would have limited these troublesome tendencies to reify a sense of *woman* that is clearly at odds with what other women construct themselves as subjects/selves. Does Massing really believe when she writes that the

"voice that is heard can only be *une voix presque mienne*" (p. 22)? Or does her hermeneutic-phenomenological writing conflate information, knowledge and truth? Later this takes on somewhat incredible dimensions when she claims that the phenomenological analysis of 'speaking up' holds true across characteristics such as race and class (p. 151).

This seductive power of text to cause us to conflate what we *actually* know in the particular with what we *desire* to know in the general, is ever present. This conflation is what I am mindful of trying to avoid in the work with the students in *Pump Up the Volume!* Symbols do not sit between us and the world, they construct our understanding of the world. We come to the world through language and symbol. Yet we cannot allow text to use us, we must struggle to use it (even if as the deconstructionists tell us this is a Sisyphian task). The self is discursively constituted. Yet in analyzing a journal entry in Massing from Marilyn, we see an attempt to impose meanings external to the life-worlds of other subjects constituting themselves. Marilyn laments about an Early Childhood course that "invites us to play" but she is concerned about "the mark" (p. 175). Massing makes the claim, as does Marilyn, that this "competition" among the students is a "betrayal" that inhibits women speaking up. But surely this is disingenuous. How is this a uniquely gendered social relation? More fundamentally, is competition something only girls reject? How can we know for sure that there is an ideal gender neutral pedagogical practice that can emerge from this study that is unhinged from patriarchy and competition? There is danger here, particularly when Massing concludes her study by suggesting that ECS graduates need to be strengthened to resist "a dominant discourse that runs counter to their beliefs and practices" (p. 182). Changing grading procedures and classroom management practices to move away from 'competition' appears sound, but for *women*? In short, how can we situate a transcendent sense of "self and knowing" (p. 183), as being uniquely female? Some postmodernists would turn all of us on our heads and ask: is it time now to do feminism without *woman* (as a category)? To make "truthful" claims about gendered ways of being requires as Flax argues, an "archimedes point" that is external or removed from the current social environment - one that allows us to escape "our embeddedness" (1991, p. 140). The hermeneutic-phenomenologist talk of "trust" and "betrayal", of "self" and "knowing" seems problematic without continually engaging the question on the other side - what causes us to come forward, to meet difficulty?

There is reification in talking about "betrayal" as Massing does of the women keeping silent. To say they are silent because they feel "betrayed" is saying nothing at all. Betrayal inscribes its opposite, "trust". In the hall of binaries the deconstructionists illuminate for us, we see the transparency of signs: "emancipated women", "open discourse", and "freedom from betrayal." These become totalisms or ways of being that attempt to penetrate "deep inside" our subjectivities (as Foucault would say), trying to perpetuate the lie of selves; creating amnesia

about how these very terms or language games attempt to reproduce themselves - most readily through subjects who sense themselves and their texts as *Real*. It is true what Massing suggests at the outset - "there can be no theoretical constructs that can be adopted, unquestionably, as a starting point" (p.11) . The interrogation of her work with Foucault would have prevented the reification of transcendent *selves* and *woman*. Foucault reminds us that "the will to knowledge" (hermeneutic-phenomenological or otherwise), creates a *sense* of subject and self (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 200-301). Essentialism is the offspring that follows. Informing her work with the Lyotardian sense that *there are no selves, just transformations,* would have been consistent with her first two chapters that attempted to "speak through stories" rather than impose language games.

Certainly Massing's work is an important contribution to our understanding of how classroom experiences are not gender neutral. Describing the effects of these experiences on female students is work that must be done. This is a moral imperative in a society that grounds itself on the (rhetoric?) equality of opportunity. Significant gender differences in personal experiences in classroom life have been explored in a variety of contexts and methodologies.

Ryan (1992) for example, explored such differences in science classes. Her work reveals patterns of girls being called upon less often to respond to questions, boys doing more of the tactile work in labs, and leaving the girls to "record" lab results. As well, the power relations of language are explored, where for example, a military metaphor of 'acids *attacking* metals' is used to conceptualize a chemical process. It is, as many writers and researchers are doing, time to construct a "feminine ethos"; since as Riane Eisler reminds us, "ours is a species that quite literally lives by stories and images, by the myths - be they religious or secular (1990, p. 35).

The hermeneutic-phenomenological recovery of 'speaking-up' might be most helpful if considered as a contribution to "myth telling" or allegory, as described by Cornell (1991, p. 195). Framed in this way, a woman telling 'her story' maintains evocative power but resists the temptation to make determinative truth claims about gendered difference. This allegorical writing will still reveal "the weight of oppression" felt by many women but denies any "atemporal universality." While the myth or allegory struggles to give itself significance, we as subjects constituting ourselves must "retrace" the myth but never allow to "encircle us " (p. 196).

It was Sophocles who said "A modest silence is a woman's crown" (cited in Cole, 1988, p. 45). Massing recovers the emancipatory power felt by women 'speaking up', of 'breaking the silence.' This is a part of the process of recognizing feelings and having the willingness to act on them (p. 182). Massing has shown the depth of the resistance to 'speak up'; it now remains for teachers in the classroom to begin to understand this and make the changes necessary to open spaces where the silence might give way to voices.

***talking hard* - A Possibility for Young Women Speaking Up?**

In the film *Pump Up the Volume!,* Allan Moyle, explores the lived world of some Arizona teenagers in a small city, confronted by the authoritarianism of a school administration that selectively weeds out students with low S.A.T. scores. The film focuses on the activities of a shy teen (played by Christian Slater) who broadcasts an illegal radio program out of his home. His true identity as the late night king of underground radio is concealed - Slater is unable to speak in school because he finds the environment so repressive. By night he assumes the role of Hard Harry, talking with his audience of like-minded teens who are disaffected by the school's surveillance of their marks and private lives. Hard Harry must remain concealed, since he speaks, in many ways, for what Massing might call "the lesser", the silenced ones. Momentarily setting aside the obvious gender problem of transposing Massing's term to a male sexed body (Slater), I wish to explore the tissues of *Pump Up the Volume!* as a site of political resistance. In this exploration I hope to tease out a reading of the film that gives space for overcoming the muted silence of adolescents in a local site - a high school that betrays itself as anything but a pedagogical place.

Elspeth Probyn (1990) explores the fragmented set of possibilities for struggling for an identity and agency at the local level. She raises Spivak's question: " Can the subaltern speak?" The subaltern speaks of the silenced ones, the occluded, the homosexual, the abject, the marginalized. In my reading of Massing and *Pump Up the Volume!*, women and adolescents are included in this category of the subaltern. I read Massing and *Pump Up the Volume!*, as Spivak's sense of "epistemic violence" that attempts to colonize and subdue the Other. It is Probyn's contention that the local site of resistance to this colonization is not empirically knowable, since to describe it is always to do so in ways framed by the discourse that frames the site of repression. There is only, in Probyn's sense of the site of resistance, the act of interrupting and rearranging texts so that we might come to some sense of what this site of resistance might look like. From a phenomenological sense, we are looking for experiences of bodies as multiple subjectivities engaged in *acting, resisting,* and *being complicit* within local sites where epistemes are circulated to be fixed on subjects, but where subjects creatively resist and produce new labels and names for themselves and their actions. This antinomy is configured as the *bricoleur,* where agents actively piece together new signs in novel and often unsanctioned meanings. In this way agents resist interpellation (although some inevitably occurs).

Perhaps the richest example of this *bricoleur* is Slater's appropriation of the patriarchal text of the phallus as the location of power. The movie opens with Slater pretending to masturbate over the air, appropriating the icon of the sexual power of the young adolescent male who is never satisfied. Slater complains to his listeners that it has been "six times today". He cries "it won't go away - free me!" as he feigns an ejaculation. Sex, like school, is a burden. Hard Harry then goes

on to read fan mail, letters complaining about the futility of school and the drone-like existence many students lead at the hands of over-bearing teachers and parents.

I read beyond the obvious vulgarity of the masturbation scene to another text. (Many of Harry's listeners are curious females who range from sexual innocents to obviously sensuous and experienced females. The viewer gazes upon them as the film cuts to a variety of bedroom scenes where these females variously giggle nervously or fantasize about Harry's sexual prowess.) Harry urges his listeners to call or write letters, to share their frustrations and feelings about school. Harry reads a letter that reveals that the school counselor urged one of the students to quit school because the student was pregnant. The letter goes on to reveal that the school will expel the girl if she does not quit. Flipping the semiotic code of the call-in show, Harry calls up the named counselor and proceeds to confront him over the issue - live on the air. Hard Harry names names. Needless to say the counselor is not amused and threatens Harry. The listeners eat it up.

Another letter is from a depressed teen who complains about being lonely. Slater calls up the teenager and on air attempts to talk the youth out of his suicide plans. Tragically, he fails. Slater is devastated by the teen's death and quits broadcasting. Meanwhile, Hard Harry's programs have been taped by the students who later play them all over the school. The school administration continues its crackdown on undesirable students and attempts to use the still elusive and unmasked Hard Harry as a scapegoat, blaming his program for the tragic suicide of the boy. The repressive measures continue. Around the school students respond with graffiti that make allegations against the administration. Hard Harry's slogans are everywhere. *Talk hard* becomes a ubiquitous calling forward of student resistance. Finally, after the encouragement of his new girlfriend, Nora, Slater is persuaded to continue his broadcasts. Inevitably he is tracked down by the authorities and finally resorts to broadcasting from a portable transmitter rigged up in his mother's jeep. Slater is finally arrested after the inevitable Hollywood chase scene. The closing scene in the movie sees Harry and his friend Nora, escorted into a paddy-wagon as the students cheer them on. Harry urges them one more time - *talk hard!*

One reading of *Pump Up the Volume!* sees it as a typical Hollywood appropriation of teenage culture and icons. This would ignore many of the nuances of the film as an exploration of a rich and confusing lived experience for teenagers. Connolly sees the film, among others, as part of a "middle class fear and loathing" genre (1993, pp.20-27). Slater's audience is not a homogenous mass of pimple-faced teens glued passively to every word he says. As the camera sweeps across the community I gaze upon a heterogeneous and problematic group of youngsters. The faces are of a resignation and emptiness that I can only describe as *sullenness*. Albert Borgmann (1991, pp. 7-8) describes this state of *sullenness* in the postmodern condition in terms of a recognition of the futility of responding, of saying anything, of doing anything; *it's all been said before and nothing seems to change*. This is an analogue of my metaphor of *cynizen*. As Hard Harry proclaims one

night, "All the great themes have been exhausted and turned into theme parks". (In the summer of 1989 our family made a pilgrimmage to Disneyland. I took my four year old daughter through "It's a small world" - a boat ride through a brightly lit cavern that features singing puppets from around the world. As I watched my daughter's face light up I felt tears coming up from deep inside me. To this day I am not sure the tears were for her joyful innocence before this simulacra of international harmony, or for my (sad) inability to share in it's brilliance. Am I, like many of my students, too far gone as a *cynizen*?)

As a teacher viewing the film I feel that I have taught many of these students. I am also cautioned to respond to the film in a way that is mindful of the experience of being an adolescent. Writing-off the movie as superficial "teeny - bopper" entertainment would be a mistake. I am reminded of John Willinsky's cautionary note; we must be aware of how text constitutes our reality, how modernist text writes out a response for us (Willinsky, 1992). Is my subject position informed by a text of a 37 year old teacher who has three children, who pays a mortgage, and who drinks and eats and lives only in middle class moderation? Instead, I resist a reading of the film that marginalizes the experiences of these kids.

This film captures a polymorphous youth, a youth that defies categories and structures created to marginalize. One poignant scene occurs when a young man calls Hard Harry and complains how lonely it is to be a homosexual. The boy asks Harry, "why does it matter that I was born this way ", referring to his fear of being taunted by his peers. The boy's call troubles Hard Harry, as it does his listeners, who appear mindful of the boy's suffering. Certainly a conventional Hollywood film would not have included such a character. Females are portrayed in a rich variety of ways, none of them cartoon-like. One girl, frustrated that her life is totally dominated and monitored by her parents, responds by destroying all of her cosmetics and dressing much more casually, shedding her 'beauty-queen' image. Two obviously overweight girls dance on a bed while Harry sings over the air, as do a variety of kids, big and tall, fat and skinny.

What I see in *Pump Up the Volume!* is the "anger, frustration, and indignation" that Massing uncovers in her sense of women speaking up. I offer an appropriation of Massing's sense of "the lesser" trying to *talk hard*. Important in this appropriation, is the caveat that I do not read into the film a sense of community as conceived in a modernist discourse. These are not rational citizens whose rights have been violated by the democratic state. These kids live as individual subjectivities in the simulacra of popular culture - their music and clothes is one indication of this. Their subjectivities are polymorphic and defy categorization. In a postmodern sense, these kids are written upon and write upon themselves. Judith Butler might frame their subjectivity as an "enmired" one - vigorously given form by resistance and complicity (1992, pp. 148-149). These kids, along with Hard Harry, appropriate and interrupt the signifiers that slide over their sense of

the real. During the final protest demonstration in the school parking lot a giant phallus is paraded around by both male and female students. Watching these kids I had a sense that perhaps Baudrillard would be wrong in calling this a simulation of exhausted and empty signifiers - these kids do not live with exhausted signifiers, these students continually exhaust and rebuild them.

So how does *talking hard* offer a site of resistance and agency? Christopher Lasch sensed the danger inherent in a disintegrated and disarticulated self that pragmatically acts in the world. Lasch's critique of narcissism offers a powerful bridging between the binary of psychic reality of individuals struggling to becomes selves, and the social reality that attempts to inscribe upon them. (Many postmodernists would oppose the constructed binary as illusory. I present this binary as a convenience for describing the problem of agency in the film.) It is Lasch's contention that the motivation for agency is to be found not in some phantasm of glorious utopian vision that subjects have, but in a sense of *limits* that exist in their existence. He writes that psychoanalysis understands this sense of *limits* quite clearly. He argues that psychoanalysis points to "our dependent position in the world, of the limits of human knowledge, and on the need for others who nevertheless remain separate from ourselves. It is the discovery of human limits that creates the possibility of fraternity; and it is the refusal to acknowledge those limits...that makes the idea of fraternity so difficult for a modern emancipated intellectual to fathom." (cited in Chang, 1992, p. 311). Is it in acknowledging our limits that we find a humanity in ourselves? Within the limits we make our affective investments in the world.

What Lasch suggests is what Foucault offers about thinking in limits, about confronting the limits in an attempt to self-create through transgression of discursively inscribed limits. Yet to describe the precise form of this agency remained elusive for Foucault; "to contribute to changing certain things in people's ways of perceiving and doing things, to participate in this difficult displacement of forms of sensibility and thresholds of tolerance - I hardly feel capable of attempting much more than that" (Foucault, 1985, pp. 11-12).

There are two key elements then in locating the possibility for agency in the lives of teenagers. These can be framed as follows: 1. The *uncovering of our limits* and confronting these, (as described in *women speaking up*) and, 2. the *transgression*, thinking and doing the possibilities of resistance (to be discussed in the following).

Transgression can be read in *Pump Up the Volume!* It is knowing what shapes and frames the limits that gives the invitation and the tools to act in the world as an agent. As Chang suggests, "without knowing the transgression, there is no social change and progress possible" (p. 312). This is a powerful hermeneutic or nodal point in the life-world of subjects constructing meaning of their experience. The *transgression* emerges out of the uncovering of our limitations. This is when we regain the initiative to act against inscription, against being *written in*. For Hard Harry,

these transgressions were sites in the air waves, broadcast to the students. Resistances among the students took many forms, some parodic (parading the phallus), some more overt (the cover girl blowing up her cosmetics.)

Cycle Three Approaches

There is then, a dialogical antinomy embedded in the linkage between *uncovering our limits* and *transgression*. The work I propose to do then, is to invite students to share their experiences when they felt silenced as did the students in the film *Pump Up the Volume!* Students will be invited to view the film and respond to it - describing instances when they felt like *talking hard* against being silenced. I will invite students to share experiences located in their immediate past or present. Recall that in Chapter Three in film response, I have incorporated other activities that allow students to write-in alternative story lines, or to recontextualize characters. This is done in the sense of *hetroglossia* as described by Bakhtin, who rejects the notion of original authorship. "The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'ones own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention (1981, pp. 293-294). This populating "the word" with one's own intention, will be helpful for the female students in taking up the heavily male coded tactic of *'talking hard'*. In Chapter 8 I will explore this difficulty for female students more fully.

Of particular importance here in this plan for cycle three, is my sense that females who are particularly silenced in our society, can be given a vehicle for speaking out, by appropriating what is essentially a male gendered construction - *talking hard*. Slater, in the film, represents a masculine voice, yet females in the film respond to his message to *talk hard*. Indeed, Slater's female friend, Nora, becomes his collaborator in the project of unmasking the power of the school administration. So this appropriation of a male gendered trope - *talking hard* offers students, I believe, a performative option that in no way naturalizes or essentializes female experience. Rather *talking hard* acts as a metaphor to appropriate a male voice and then to disrupt the dominant discourse. This is a Foucauldian response to Spivak's question: "Can the subaltern speak?" The answer is perhaps - *talking hard*.

Perhaps in Social Studies 30 classes, when exploring such political themes as *participation* and *resistance*, exploring opportunities for students to "scribble in the margins" of dominant texts may be of pedagogic potential. It offers an opportunity for students to give their different meanings to texts, to expropriate and appropriate text so as to allow space for the pedagogic relation to grow between student and teacher as altered cultural constructions are allowed. To develop activities for classroom use, to draw from the everyday life-world of the students, I will draw on Jenkins' "textual poaching" that we attempted in the first cycle of our research. *Talking hard*, as

framed by the film *Pump Up the Volume!,* offers an opportunity for exploring student affective investment in their constructed sites of action. As Probyn's 'travels in the postmodern' reminds us, the site of resistance in our future will often be locally constructed as fragmented possibilities. So we prepared for the last cycle of our work with the students.

As the next chapter indicates, affective investment and the commitment of becoming socially interested agents is not a project that remained something the students experienced, leaving Rod and I as outside observers. As we prepared to begin our last week with students in April, we found ourselves engaged in our own questions of agency.

CHAPTER 6
CROSSING THE LIMITS: INTO THE THIRD CYCLE

Introduction

The viewing and work on *Pump Up the Volume!* was to represent the third and last cycle of our action research project. As events transpired in the two weeks in April before the viewing of the film, I was reminded of framing the discontinuities and impossibility of our work as a linear narrative. In action research we are sometimes moles burrowing in the site of praxis. Preoccupied with getting on with the job, we often forget that the tunnels we have dug behind us can close in behind. Having a plan in action research is helpful, but the terrain cannot be known until the first tunnels are dug. So as smart moles might say, "plan your dig, but don't dig your plan" ('dig' as in grow fond of - 'to groove'). What I am hinting at here, is a bit of what Habermas cautioned when he described modes of reasoning (i.e. instrumentalism) (1987, Ch. 8), drawing us into difficulties we do not anticipate.

What I wish to do is preface the events of the last two weeks of April in the way that Dallmayer employs Heidegger's "strong sense of life-world." I read Dallmayer's appropriation of Heidegger as a way of cross-reading a question I raised earlier (in Chapter 4) about the "inner push to walk into change" that Elly Bulkin raises (1984, p. 16). For Bulkin, "walking into change" involves, "trying to learn how to live, to have the speaking-to extend beyond the moment's word, to act as to change the unjust circumstances that keep us from being able to speak to each other" (p. 13). Yet this learning "how to live" is a slippery seduction that compels me to simultaneously draw into my own subject-centerdness when feeling confronted by others and to conversely position myself as the surveyor of these others - to foreground their own sense of "how to live" against my own. Such a positioning of others is that of the action researcher who presents and fixes others in words that try to make appear that which seems hidden.

To reveal the Other is the project I wish to avoid. To expose my own vigorous entanglements with others is all that I can accomplish. It is these entanglements that might give way to seeing the action researcher (as a socially interested subject) as only found momentarily and in the relation to contingent forces or agencies of power. These agents of power appear and disappear from sites of praxis; the action researcher cannot ignore their presence. In this sense I am building from Grossberg who sees agency not as individuals or groups but of Gramsci's "tendential forces" who "have a life of their own" but intersect sites "conjuncturally" (1992, p. 123). Here I am referring to the Other as parents, school officials, and trustees who up until this time existed with "a life of their own". As mentioned in the previous chapter, agents, as "the actors, institutions and groups which act to change or direct history", do not necessarily do so intentionally (p. 397). Agents can set in place structures or forces (de Certeau might call these

strategies that construct places) that allow for developments that are contrary to their original intentions. Perhaps a more obvious example is the 'unholy' alliance or equivalence generated around efforts to rid America of "pornography". Feminists such as MacKinnon who organize anti-porn efforts end up being positioned to be seen supporting the efforts of the Right to limit access of certain books and ideas from the public. Mercer describes this difficulty nicely when he sets out the distinction between *equivalence* (when actors demand the same sorts of things for different reasons) and *identification* (when opposing subjects or actors come together to work toward a common goal) (1992, p. 446).

What all of this suggests is that agents and agency must be mapped out in terms of a complex cartography of everyday life (Grossberg, 1992, p. 63). Grossberg uses the analogy of the jigsaw puzzle - pieces of evidence (what subjects report, what economic and political forces are at play) that can be analyzed. Yet it is not until the pieces (subjects, actors as agents, agentic forces) come together that one gets an image of power and its effects. There is in this approach to cultural studies, a commitment to struggling with the question: "How do specific cultural practices work, through what modes of functioning, to produce what concrete effects?" (p. 63). This commitment to understanding systems of articulated power from a grounding of their "oppressive effects" is what Flax sees as the strength of feminism (1992, p. 455). As she emphasizes, there remains a "frightening necessity" to move beyond transcendental guarantees towards a sensitivity to "contingent and imperfect contexts" (p. 460).

What I read unfolding in this chapter then, are some practical entanglements in the terrain of action research at Greystone School. The effects of power, as articulated through the conjunctural meeting of agents (parents, trustees, us as researchers) cannot be described as 'this or that'. I do not want to offer a panoptic view of what transpired. Rather, I offer only a sense of how we as action researchers were drawn forward to acknowledge our situated limitations and how we choose to act in these limitations to construct a place in which to live.

In the events leading up to the viewing of *Pump up the Volume!* with the students, one might read the entanglements described in this chapter as Merleau-Ponty, as intertwining or enlacement (*entrelacs*). I draw upon Waldenfels' synthesis of Merleau-Ponty's work on *chiasm* as a practical way of reading action researchers as simultaneously fleeing from others and being drawn to them (Waldenfals in White, 1989, p.72-74). It is in this sense of a *dispersed centeredness* that I position this recounting of the events leading up to the viewing of the film with the students. The questions I visit in this chapter are the same for me as an action researcher as those I raise for the students: what simultaneously repels and draws us as subjects to others in ways that limit and empower us to act as agents? What is the experience of *starting something* - of being seen to be the first to speak up or act? Once having gone forward, how do we as subjects attempt to control, to give shape to that which is often times unmaleable, difficult to predict and

control. I hope to draw on my experiences in preparation for the third cycle of the action research to intersect a feminist phenomenological reading of these questions. In puzzling through these questions I hope to position myself with the students as we read *Pump Up the Volume!*

A Practical Entanglement - *Hard Harry* Goes to School

In Chapter 5 the role that *Pump Up the Volume!* was to have in the research project was outlined. Both Rod and I anticipated the final stage of our work with the students to begin around the second week of April. Given the nature of the film material we were using (both films *Grand Canyon* and *Pump up the Volume!* had been rated R or PG 13), we proceeded to notify parents and guardians consistent with the school board's policy on Controversial Issues (Policy 3062 see Appendix D 1). The letter sent home with the students, we believed, was a routine matter. With Parent-Teacher interviews coming in a few days both Rod and I expected an opportunity, if need be, to further clarify the use of the films with anyone who might be interested.

It was the evening of Thursday, April 15, that Rod realized that problems were on the horizon. Two parents approached him and raised questions about the suitability of the film *Pump Up the Volume!* A particular concern was the overt sexuality of the main character, Hard Harry. These parents identified the scenes of masturbation and the language as "having no place in a school." Another point raised by one set of parents in particular, was the "open defiance of authority by the students" in the film. Rod attempted to discuss the matter with these parents but after ten minutes realized that this was not an appropriate venue in which to continue the discussion. With other parents waiting to talk to him, and the parents having other teachers to see that night, the parents proceeded to discuss the matter with the school Principal. After that discussion the Principal raised the issue with me and requested clarification. Quickly it became obvious that both Rod and I were going to encounter some difficulty with at least one of the films. After my discussion with the Principal it seemed apparent that the parents were adamant that the film not be shown in the school.

What struck me as difficult to accept was the fact that of the 75 letters sent home only three came back with any questions raised. One parent indicated to Rod that she had signed the form "reluctantly" because she did not want to single out her daughter by excluding her from class when the film was shown. Rod assured the parent that we would do everything possible to help avoid her daughter being "singled out." In the case of a second set of parents, they indicated that they would not permit their daughter to view the film. They did not raise any questions about the film with either Rod, myself or the Principal.

It was on April 20 that I received a telephone call from the division Superintendent,

indicating he had received a call from the one of the parents that had talked to Rod earlier. They expressed the same concerns with him that they had expressed with Rod the previous week at the Parent-teacher interviews. The Superintendent, having not viewed the film and being unfamiliar with its proposed use and context, had discussed the matter with the Principal. Given the fact that the parents objected so strenuously and indicated they would "go to the Board" with the matter, we both agreed that I should meet with the parents as soon as possible. It was Tuesday evening, two days before Rod and I had planned to begin work on the film with the students. Rod and I decided at that point to meet with them and "see what happens." As far as we knew, it was only these two parents who were in opposition to the film. Could one set of parents delay, perhaps scuttle our work? Would the Superintendent ask to have the film pulled? Would our work come to an end? What would we tell the students? These other questions skittered into my mind as I discussed with Rod the impending meeting with the parents scheduled for the next evening. I found myself trying to ask questions that made sense, that helped me understand what was going on. I could not find any answers. Soon I found myself trying to ask questions that had answers - there seemed something soothing in asking "if the film is pulled are there alternatives?" I thought immediately, "sure there are..." but then the fist kept closing around my thoughts. It was the feeling of tightening, of having no choice, of having to squirm around while being pressed down. As I think back to the day of our meeting with the parents I realize the impossibility of living reflectively and critically in such a space. Here I was, having spent weeks working on the project, now facing the prospect of having it ended for a reason that seemed unjustifiable to me. In my frustration there was no space, no place to be reflective, to focus on pedagogical issues or anything else. It was not anger; it was a sense of irreconcilable resentment of the predicament I was in.

What was my role in all of this now? Should we pull the film to prevent the possibility that the Board might react by clamping down on "lots of other things we drag into the classroom?" What of the film *Platoon* that I brought into class last year?", I thought. Slowly I could start to distinguish other desires starting to emerge from the general feeling of resentment I felt. What of the long term implications? If we let this film die, what's next? What are we saying to the students? To stand in front of the kids and say, "sorry, no film" - "what kind of bullshit would this be? " asked one of the students who commented on what was happening.

Rod and I met with the parents. Things did not go well - they were adamant in wanting the film pulled. Following the meeting Rod and I briefly talked. It was clear that we now had to take a stand. "If we pull the film, what are we admitting to - that one parent can stop future films and presentations as well?" If the parents were proceeding to the Board we decided to confront the issue head on. A letter to the Superintendent mapping out our position seemed the choice to make. It is offered as a way for the reader to read our sense of difficulty and entanglement.

April 22, 1993

Superintendent of Schools
Greystone School Division

Thank you for your telephone call on Tuesday, April 20, regarding the concerns raised about the films being used as part of the research project I am undertaking with Rod Phillips. Following your call I contacted the two parents that had expressed concern about the films. (While two other parents raised questions with Mr. Phillips last week these appeared to merely involve clarification of the learning activities we were proposing.) Permit me to review what as taken place since our discussion on Tuesday.

I invited the two parents to meet with myself and Mr. Phillips on Wednesday evening at the high school. When I telephoned Mrs. R, she informed me that she "had no problem whatsoever" excluding her daughter from the films and opting for alternative films instead. Indeed she stated, "I've always appreciated the school's policy about contacting us when things like this come up". I discussed her concern that her daughter not be asked to view any film that contained vulgar language and nudity. I assured her that we had two alternative activities (film responses) for any student in this position. Mrs. R. again thanked us for sending the letter home (attached). She also declined to attend the meeting since in her view, "it was the parents of each student who should decide" in cases such as this.

Mr. and Mrs. B. did choose to meet with myself and Mr. Phillips. After an hour of discussion it was clear that no compromise was possible. Mr. B. was emphatic that the film *Pump Up the Volume!* had no place in the school. He did however permit his daughter to view the first film, *Grand Canyon* (which we viewed on Wednesday and Thursday of this week). I can assure you that our conversation was an amicable one - both Mr. Phillips and I appreciate the parents' concern about the film's graphic sexual themes and its "total disregard for authority" (as Mr. B. phrased it). We attempted, unsuccessfully, to explain that these elements were inextricable elements of some adolescent sub-cultures that were, in fact, the object of the research that we were asking the students to engage in. We discussed alternative films that would deal with the themes raised in the research (student alienation, homosexuality, minority rights). We came to an impasse at this point - firstly there are no films that deal with these themes, and secondly, Mr. B. expressed concern that "such topics shouldn't be part of the curriculum anyway". I attempted to explain that the point of the research is to explore the concepts of power and personal security raised in the Social Studies 30 curriculum in new ways that would be more relevant to students. Frankly, I sensed we came to an impasse at this point when Mr. B. questioned me about my personal opinion regarding homosexuality and whether or not homosexuality is a "social studies issue." It was obvious that our positions were being further divided on lines of defining what are appropriate issues for study in high schools. The meeting ended with Mr. B. suggesting that he would

contact you in an attempt to have the showing of the film *Pump Up the Volume!* stopped for all the classes. We thanked the B's for taking the time to come out and for their interest in the project.

After reviewing the events of the last two days, permit me to share a few observations. Firstly, both Mr. Phillips and I believe that we have followed both the spirit and the letter of Policy 3062 (Controversial Issues). Indeed, I recall my personal involvement in working out details of an earlier version of this policy a number of years ago. The exploration of "alternative" points of view in developing the Social Studies 30 program is something that we believe is consistent with policy statement #2. This research is controversial by definition; any attempt to question a male dominated curriculum that has been institutionalized so long is bound to raise concerns (e.g. homosexuals as a minority, women as a marginalized group). There are few, if any, resources available to do this work. That is why we are under-taking this work. There is an educational need; we are teachers committed to helping meet this need.

Further to Policy 3062, parental notification and support is amply provided for. Out of 75 letters that were sent home, 72 came back immediately with approval.One parent signed "because they didn't want to isolate their daughter", the other two were the two mentioned in this letter. Pursuant to Policy 3062, we also provided for alternative activities. As for the requirement that resources and texts used be reviewed by appropriate "interest groups", we have attempted to communicate our objectives and educational intents with anyone who inquired. Indeed several parents have expressed keen support for what we are doing - one member of the PAC committee asked to be invited in the class so that she could participate!

In closing, I submit these points for your consideration. Policy 3062 was developed to help us as educators, parents, and students deal with difficulties such as this one. Through the "opting out" provision, Policy 3062 respects differences about the means to achieve the community goal we all share - meeting the needs of students. Mr. B. wishes to prevent *any* student from seeing the film in question (and by default, putting an end to the research project and the valuable educational experience that will be provided for students). Given the Board's efforts in developing Policy 3062, and our efforts to adhere to it, is this a realistic request? I do respect Mr. B's right to "opt out", as the other parents have chosen to do. I also respect the spirit of Policy 3062 and the overwhelming support of the parents and students who have expressed their interest in the work currently underway. For these reasons, I would urge that this work be allowed to continue and that the spirit and integrity of Policy 3062 be maintained.

Sincerely,

J-C Couture

cc. Principal

A telephone call merely reporting on what happened seemed to leave us vulnerable, simply lying in waiting for events to unfold. Writing the letter appeared as a strategy to establish a place for our position. So I offer the letter I sent to the Superintendent in two ways: as a locating of the events leading up to the meeting with the parents, and as an indication of the location from which to speak about the meeting itself. In this way I read the letter now as the beginning of writing ourselves into the script that one set of parents was writing for us. That script, of course, was the process of 'going public', of requesting the board to prohibit the film being shown.

In writing the letter I was no longer positioning myself as the researcher surveying the terrain (the Stay Puffed Man): the recognized who is not recognizable. What was emerging in the decision to write the letter was the public admission that I was situated as a subject in the research, that distancing myself was a privilege dressed up in the garb of the academic researcher who surveys from above and writes about others. This is not a location that the action researcher can operate from in the postmodern. My letter reveals my complicity and collusion with the project of getting *Pump Up the Volume!* into the classroom, my role as a former teacher at the school, as someone clever enough to write about the board policy in a way that makes it seem intelligible to a select community of readers (framed as *those who will decide*), and most importantly, as someone who might end up being positioned as the transgressor.

As a potential transgressor, there can be no mask of objectivity or reality, there can be only be incompatibilities and incongruities as a subject who engages the other. This is the point Lather draws from Deleuze's admonition on the death of educational research theory and those who claim to engage in it. As Deleuze suggests, "For us the intellectual theorist...has been a subject, a representing consciousness...there is no longer any representation, there is only action, theory's action, the action of practice in the relationship of networks" (cited on Lather, 1991, p. 155).

The day following sending the letter I received another call from the Superintendent. I waited momentarily on the phone as he explained that the letter was "very well done" and that the letter indicated "that you have followed the procedures from 3062 quite thoroughly." He then made the suggestion that " this is still a very difficult one to call." "Perhaps what is best is for the board to look at this." "There next meeting is in Redrock, on May 5." At this point I was both relieved and surprised. At least he was not asking that the film be pulled. But to have the board review the matter would take a lot of time at a board meeting. How could I make such a presentation in an intelligible way? Would the board watch the whole film? These are questions I presented. After several minutes it was agreed that I would present "representative" selections of the film and outline the context of the film with the trustees. "This would be a good opportunity for the board to clarify its own position on these issues as well," the Superintendent suggested. Indeed, this would be "an education" for all of us. As I hung up the phone I immediately began thinking about the presentation to the board scheduled for May 5. The road to Redrock lay ahead.

The Stay Puffed Man Goes to Redrock

The hamlet of Redrock is cushioned against the foothills of the Rockies thirty miles from the nearest major population center. The Board locates its meetings throughout the widespread jurisdiction, and Redrock was to be this month's location. Expecting the road to be a rough one I left early - arriving almost one hour before the meeting began. As I sat in my car waiting, I stared out at the mountains and vast quiet openness. The preparations I had undergone for the meeting skittered through my head. Rather than present an edited version of the film to the Board I decided to show a representative segment - one that I believed was indicative of the scenes that were objectionable to the parents and one that would indicate the sophistication and sensitivity of the film. Had I chosen a suitable segment? Was it too graphic in its representation of the film's overt sexuality? Was it too 'tame'? Trying to second guess the reaction of the Board was not my intention; I did want them to judge the film, but showing it in its entirety seemed unreasonable and would not have made the issue any clearer. I kept trying to remind myself that I had to focus on the issue raised in my letter to the Superintendent - the policy on controversial issues was followed and the Board would have to make its determination based on the criteria set out in that policy. I caught sight of two ravens fighting over what looked like the remains of a small rodent that had been run over by a vehicle. I thought about the events of the last week - and a statement I had heard recently; "if you want to get hit by a truck, play on the road." Is this what action research gets you - playing on the road? I headed inside for the meeting.

As I attempt to recount the meeting with the Board I am aware of how various codes played alongside each other to create what might be read as a *topos;* a network that struggles to eliminate blank spaces and looseness (Barthes, 1992, p. 33). In Barthes' sense of our struggle to weave meanings in our communications, what I read throughout the presentation were the various "off-stage voices" that could be heard, their convergence creating a writing of the presentation and discussion. This *topos* is woven through the a "mirage of structures" that we come to know only through absence and interruption. What I read from the presentation is the texts already read by myself and the trustees as we discuss *Pump Up the Volume!*

The trustees were circled facing each other with presenters positioned on the outside of the circle. Rod was in attendance at the meeting as well. As our Local Alberta Teachers' Association President, he attended all monthly Board meetings. (Rod and I agreed that as the initiator of the project, I would make the formal part of the presentation and speak to the film clips.) I opened with a brief explanation about my interest in the re-reading of the Social Studies 30 curriculum, focusing in particular on how it has historically provided a very narrow definition of what constitutes "politics." I gave examples of how "politics" and issues such as "security" and "citizen participation" might be explored in places where students live - in the family, workplace and at school. I emphasized my work was an exploration of a curricular change. Was I thinking by

framing the project as 'experimental' that I could deflect possible criticism of the work from our 'normal practice'? I sensed my tentativeness about the film, trying to appear as a disinterested agent who was 'trying things out.' In actuality I was deeply committed to the film and what it could do for the students. Several times I caught myself referring to "the project", and "the research", as if it had an existence without anybody in it. I felt myself wanting to be the Stay Puffed Man - floating above the room.

After five minutes of reviewing the intent behind the use of the film I must admit that I found I had inappropriately woven a sense that this was a structured, linear research with "clear" questions. In my effort to sound dispassionate and unattached to the film and the work, I shaped what Barthes might call a "unitary, architectonic, finite" text (1992, p. 33) that avoided my actual bewildered and muddled sense of what I was trying to do. While drawing on curriculum discourse that obliterated the lived experience of our action research to date, I cleverly trotted out phrases like "the responsibility to meet the needs of students," and " a new curriculum direction that helps students in an increasingly complicated world." Had any of the trustees really turned up the heat, I probably would have turned to the 'marshmellowy goo' that I felt inside. The Stay Puffed Man never does well in the heat. My explanations from the academic habitus were sensible, but erased by personal commitment to the students and the work I thought they would miss out on. Inside there was uncertainty. Again, the Stay Puffed Man caught in the question -"Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it?" (Higgins cited in McHale, 1992, p. 33).

As my opening remarks continued I sense that I was trying to present Rod, myself, and the students as an undifferentiated unity, when in fact there was no such thing. Our work over the last two months was grounded in the mire of contradictions, what I called earlier, practical entanglements. So here I was, in a position trying to explain that *Pump Up the Volume!* would help us talk about politics in a way more meaningful to students. Yet, could I convey the embodied sense of knowing that I had about the film without them both watching the film and engaging the students as Rod and I had done? From the privileged position of "the researcher explaining the research" I had placed myself in an untenable position. What did I really know of the students' experience? What did I understand of the experience of the parents and students who felt excluded by the film? Was I attempting anything that the trustees (as entrusted to oversee what went on the schools) would find meaningful and acceptable? In presenting to the Board copies of student activities (photo essays, poetry) that Rod and I had collected, was I attempting to construct "a history of the students" that would convince the Board that this was worthwhile work? Here, for me, was *acknowledging the limits* I appropriated from Chang in the previous chapter. Out of the cacophony that has been our work with the students, I present to the Board, something that will help write a script for Rod and I. This script codes us the

'experimenters' who have come in from 'the field' to report, rejoice, and then request. Should I employ Chang's sense of *transgression* as a way of speaking about what it feels like to go forward - to push ahead?

Is this needless and naive wringing of hands of the practitioner looking for a way to deny what poststructuralists readily admit to? This admission is to see language as the way that subjectivity is produced, that competing discourses give the world meaning through our struggle to develop systems of meaning that engender purpose and direction in our action. Framed this way, the Board reviewing of the film is a way of bringing together conflictual subjectivities that include conscious and unconscious thoughts and feelings that are being constantly reconstituted "each time we speak" (Weedon, 1987, p. 33). So can I deny the possibility that one trustee raised, that "some kids might get the wrong idea from Hard Harry and take violent action?" Can I deny the view from one trustee who feels that "the home is where many of these issues need to be dealt with." What do I know anymore than they? Yet they ask questions and I try to answer.

Following the viewing of the segment of the film an hour long discussion took place. It became clear after five minutes that on the whole the trustees felt that the film was a a potentially worthwhile resource. What was particularly poignant was the ambivalence one trustee portrayed when he commented, " it is tough work but it needs to be done." Another remarked, "there is no way we can ignore these issues (referring to homosexuality, teenage alienation)". What continued to emerge throughout the discussion was the content of the film as it related to experiences that the trustees felt were an integral part of being a teenager today. This was the most satisfying part of the afternoon for me. While I had been earlier concerned that the Board might want to exclude the multiplicity of otherness that represents "teenager" today, this was not the case. In fact, I was struck time and again by the examples that were drawn from the film and the sensitivity that was shown to the Other - the fat kid who sells Hard Harry tapes at school, the plump girls snickering at Hard Harry's sexual innuendo, the troubled homosexual student who calls Harry for help. One central office administrator made an important contribution in an effort to close the discussion: "these are difficult issues, we can't solve them - only bring them to the surface."

Throughout the discussion one trustee had serious reservations about the use of the film. His arguments were heartfelt and difficult to respond to. "Parents need to do a better job with these issues," was one point he raised. Other trustees agreed, but countered, "if they don't who will?" Also, the trustee was critical of the "value neutrality" in what we were doing. When he asked me, "how will the student's values be evaluated or measured" I responded by dragging out the social studies trope of "effective citizenship means reflecting upon the desirability and effectiveness of one's decisions." "Aside from tolerance and reasoned opinion", I continued, "the students need to develop their own values." This was not a satisfactory answer. One trustee interjected, "values

are not taught, they are learned over time being exposed to different ideas."

A lengthy discussion ensued over what constituted "*acceptable* different ideas." After one hour of discussion a sense that there was consensus emerged and the issue had been "talked through." The time now was to vote.

It has always struck me in my years on committees when a body of members feels it is time to vote. Here, I appropriate Weedon's sense of the battle for subjectivity as an emerging articulation in language (p. 41). I read Weedon and wonder about the moment when members decide to 'call the question.' I read 'the call' to the question as an invitation to admit that, at the site of discursive exchange, there is inevitably, a recognition that "each individual is an active but not sovereign protagonist" (p. 41). In a phenomenological sense this takes the form of a transparent recognition that *enough meaning for the moment* emerges. Unfortunately, voting is a crude sign that occludes this moment - since voting frames 'winners and losers.' The final vote was taken - six hands went up immediately, a seventh reluctantly. (This trustee explained his reservations again to me in a subsequent phone call and reiterated his opposition to several of the themes raised in the film. I told him that I shared his concerns but believed that the film was too valuable an opportunity to pass by.)

As I drove away from the meeting two comments made by the trustees stuck with me. They were made playfully and in a supportive tone, but left me wondering about the afternoon and the work ahead. One trustee cautioned, "it is easier to unravel kids than put them back together. I hope you'll work a lot on the second part too." Another, remarked, "so what will you do as an encore?" These were difficult questions for the Stay Puffed Man. They served to paradoxically flip my initial feeling of relief that the film would go ahead, into a sense of looking back and forward simultaneously. Had I given the impression that this educational research is about putting kids back together? This is a worthwhile goal. But I resist a project to put others "back together" when, as Barthes reminds me, all I might struggle for is a temporary "convergence of the voices (of the codes)" (Barthes, 1992, p. 34). Perhaps the discussion we had this day served the trustee's important question in another way. I wonder if our questions about the limits of what students should see in a classroom had served us momentarily as subjectivities to "put us back together"; to allow each of us to come to terms with the difficulties of deciding the answer to a pedagogical question "for other people's children" (Grumet, 1988, pp. 164-182).

Returning to the Agonism of Action Research

The seductiveness of "putting back together" is a powerful narrative line that I resist in describing the week's work with the students in viewing the film *Pump Up the Volume!* As the first class began on the morning of May 10, I was still very much aware of how close I felt the whole project came to being derailed. While I cannot say there was a real possibility of this, what

stuck in my mind was the realization that we believed that this was a possibility. In this I am mindful of Foucault's sense that power is inextricably linked to the production of Truth in the relationships that we enter into as acting subjects. Essential to Foucault's framing of acting subjects is the notion of the volatility of the co-terminus productions of truth and power. These are inextricably linked and cannot be separated. Power is exercised "as a mode of actions upon the actions of others" which invites us as subjects to constantly enter into a relationship (Foucault, 1982, p. 221). At the core of this "power relationship, and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom".

From Foucault, rather than speaking of an essential freedom, it would be better to speak of an "*agonism* - of a relationship which is at the same time reciprocal incitatation and struggle; less of a face-face confrontation which paralyzes both sides than a permanent provocation" (p. 222). Perhaps *agonism* is the description of the 'wrestling match' with others that action research throws me into. By engaging the Board on *Pump Up the Volume!*, I have been able to explore more fully, my own embodied sense of what was worthwhile in the film, what I have affectively invested in it. This investment drives my planning for the last week with the students. This investment has been refracted through the praxis of inserting myself into the irreversibility and unpredictability of relationships with others, of going forward. I am more sure now what powers my own justification for continuing the action research.

What has happened to the original conceptualization of *Pump Up the Volume!* as mapped out in the previous chapter? Because of what has happened I sense a bit of what Arendt means when she writes that in acting and speaking in the realm of human affairs, we "never really know what we are doing" (Arendt, 1958, p. 233). Again I am called back to the question I raised for the students in the previous chapter - where does the impulse or push to act and speak in the world originate? As the week begins and I look back I sense that with each action there begins a new beginning - with each new beginning comes a new fragment added, sedimented, enmired into my subjectivity. Arendt's sense of a life framed as *vita activa* is one that I appropriate to describe the action researcher caught in-between a narrative that attempts to appear linear and sequential and one that is chaotic and a sea of nonsense. In *vita activa*, I read a narrative of engagement in action research that assumes a fragmented subjectivity, and one that dissuades the reader from being seduced by the text as a description of anything but raw natality. I employ Arendt's sense of natality as a "new beginning inherent in birth" that positions the "newcomer" as someone who "possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is of acting" (p. 9). This appropriation of Arendt is a strategic one as well since it offers an understanding of action research as inevitably becoming political activity. Action research delivers one into the site of the socially interested subject. In the "conjunctural" meeting with other agencies (in this case parents, trustees), politics presents itself to us. We do not look for politics - it eventually finds us in the

sites of our affective investments. This I discovered as the film *Pump Up the Volume!* was in danger of being pulled out of our hands.

The potential for every life is to begin something new. Natality conveys the impulse of the faculty to act, to give birth to that which we cannot predict or control. I read from Arendt's sense of natality the impulse to continue to insert myself into the project. The narrative being framed here, then, is a cross-reading of Arendt and Foucault; of *going forward while not knowing,* with agonism as the effect or the emotional price of such activity. This is the existential tension of being-in-the-world as a subject constituting meaning. I think back now to what Foucault said of the significance of intransigence and recalcitrance. For the action researcher, is Arendt raising the same point in a different way? The intransigence and recalcitrance of all of the players throws us together (e.g. at the Board meeting, in the classrooms where our work continues). In this sense, of the polis as "a kind of organized remembrance", Arendt (p. 198) reminds me that political agency draws out and compels us to recover these remembrances (of assumptions, aspirations). In pouring a new cement pad screeding is an important process. Screeding involves running a smooth cold steel blade over top of the poured concrete. In this way the excess water that prevents bonding of the cement particles is removed. Without screeding the cement dries but is very brittle.

Is screeding the analogue of acting, of inserting oneself into the *polis* in order to draw out the hidden assumptions and aspirations laying below the surface? Does recalitrance and intransigence give us, as agents, the strength to bear the agonism of natality, of beginning something new? I think these are questions Arendt invites as she frames our action in the world.

> With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world....
> This insertion is not forced upon us by necessity, like labor, and is not
> prompted by utility, like work. It may be stimulated by the presence of
> others whose company we may wish to join, but is never conditioned by them;
> its impulses springs from the beginning which came into the world when we
> were born and to which we respond by beginning something new on our initiative
> (pp. 176-177).

As the last week with the students began I am aware that there is an irreversibility and unpredictability in the actions that I have taken. The assignments I have prepared, the interpretations I bring to bear on the film, the decision to go to the Board, all serve to position me as the one who is the initiator of the action. This is a place given to me by others - yet it is a place that I resist since it implies that these actions emerged from within me as a unified, coherent, subject. Yet what is given to me in the last few pages indicates the lie of such a position. Initially, I did not want to have to go before the Board - I felt pulled in many different directions. Yet I had to deliver the presentation to save the project. To do otherwise would have been to let everyone down: myself, Rod, and the students. So who/what pushed me but my own sense of having no choice? Who is the author of these events, of this project? Within Foucault's sense of

agonism, I sense the mood of wrestling with others in a difficulty. Taking up Arendt's trope of natality, I wonder if the project has many parents. Certainly I owe a lot to the Superintendent's efforts and the Board who took an interest in the work. So, how can I take responsibility for action research I have had little control of? This is the predicament that I found myself in while reading Hard Harry's situation in *Pump Up the Volume!* What makes Hard Harry hard is the boundary. As I read more, as I talked about the film with others, each moment of engagement with the film grew increasingly fractal. (Certainly the engagement of the film with the parents and the Board powered this fractal interpretativeness even more.)

So I wonder about the preparations I have undertaken, the numerous hours spent developing questions and student assignments (see Appendix D 4 and D 5). Is Gergen's pregression coming back to visit this narrative - where I am simultaneously going forward and backward? It is in the waning capacity to act and a diminished willingness to bear the sight of being a spectacle (to ones self and others) that the last week of this action research begins for me.

I am aware that my sense of the film has changed as I burrowed through the tunnels of praxis. There is my increasing fragmented sense of the work. Is an indication of this fragmentation, the offering of several options for the students to work on (see Appendix D5)? In a real sense, I share Arendt's claim of those who engage in "word and deed" in the world: "he who acts never quite knows what he is doing, that he always becomes 'guilty' of consequences he never intended or even foresaw, that no matter how disastrous and unexpected the consequences of his deed he can never undo it" (p. 233).

Perhaps guilt about making things work well has framed much of my involvement in the action research to date. Writing, reading, discussing the read backs with Rod, have all positioned me as the one who initiates, the one who has read the literature. In the last week, I have come to read *Pump Up the Volume!* as a story about both the students and myself as we question our own willingness to go forward despite the indeterminacy of knowing where or why we choose to go forward. The trick is though, any movement out from the center, from our subjectivity, is by default a forward one. The destination only becomes defined afterwards.

In the opening of this chapter I introduced Grossberg's sense of agency as a conjunctural process embedded within a situated knowing. I have attempted to map a cartography of my own entanglements in this terrain. This process of mapping my own investments *vis a vis* other actors acting as agents, has somewhat transformed my own commitment to the question of *what is politics?* that formed the impetus for this action research project. What I draw from the chapter is a reminder that in our conjunctural meeting with other agencies, we go forward in the world in the agonism and sites of our affective investments. Politics presents itself to us: we do not have to look for politics - it will find us.

CHAPTER 7
TALKING HARD! AS A SITE OF AFFECTIVE INVESTMENT

Introducing a Politics of Emotion

Bartky (1990) opens possibilities for developing student activities around the film *Pump Up the Volume!* in a manner that can be linked to Chang's call to acknowledge one's limits and to find the strength to transgress. Turning to Bartky allows a phenomenological reading of the embodied consciousness of invested subjects living in specific historical locations as they sense being undermined through shame and guilt (Bartky, pp.83-98). For Bartky, shame acts as a "pervasive affective attunement in the social environment" that profoundly disempowers women (p. 85). Shame is a state of apprehension, of feeling that there is a flaw in the self, that there is a lack or sense of being diminished as a self. This apprehension is not, as Bartky emphasizes, something that is easily described or identified. The numerous "micro behaviors" that constitute the shaming of women in the school, for example, map out experiences that " *in toto*, cannot fail to diminish women, to communicate to them the insignificance of their classroom *personae*" (p. 92). Much of these behaviors are subtle, and often go "on behind everyone's back" (p. 93) This is one of the most promising and dangerous elements of Bartky's claim.

The constitution of female self-awareness represents a contradiction between appearance and reality, since there is currently circulating in our society a publicly stated "presumption of equality on the part of all actors in this drama" (p. 94). When asked outwardly, many women will deny feeling "shamed"; to do so would to admit weakness in a world that claims that their failings have nothing to do with being subordinated by a society that is 'no longer patriarchal.' Bartky nicely side-steps the demand that such feelings be labeled a clear or cognitively based "belief" so that they can be disclosed and discussed openly. Framing feelings of shame and guilt as "sensings" that lack the clarity of belief - Bartky employs Heidegger's sense of "attunement" (*Gestimmtheit*) to Being (p. 83). In Heidegger's sense, these "attunements" are made manifest in our Being in the world when "we encounter something that matters to us" (cited in Ibid.).

Deploying a political phenomenology of emotion offers to recover the lost scent of the human struggle of being "affectively invested" (Grossberg, 1992) in the world. It allows a semiotics of locating politics with bodies that smell, bleed, and fear. Governments do not effect populations - they effect people. This point Shapiro (1992, pp. 126-127) draws from Foucault and elaborates on "a politics of fear." This is a politics that recognizes the archaeology of fear (instead of a rationalist ideology of belief). Our modernist discourses allow us to construct individuals as *citizen decision-makers* who produce a rationalistic political project for *Man* and *Society*. Contrast the statement made by an Inuit shaman who was asked about the beliefs of his people. He simply responded, "We do not believe, we fear." Shapiro reads this as the experience of experiencing

one's surroundings more intimately and less mediated than modernity allows industrial societies for its people. For Shapiro, beliefs "are phenomena that are intimately connected to a variety of institutionalized interests and procedures involved in indirect influence" (p. 128). Fear, the unintelligible concern of the subaltern, is occluded by the state centered discourse that produces and circulates its own intelligence. This is an intelligence that tries to deny limits, it tries to tell us that we cannot die if we follow the rules: eat well (the Canada Food Guide), 'drive safe' (the seatbelt law), and 'fuck safe' (the condom). It is an intelligence that tries to concern students through the curriculum, of discursive constructions such as "scarcity" and "systems" of political economy that tries to erase the reality that we are always trying to "extract life from death" (Virilio cited p. 139). As Shapirio suggests, it is time for a political narrative that allows textual practices that recover "inaccessible" thematics that explore our fears, our sense of what *is* dangerous now.

In Chapter One I explored a similar distinction that Shapiro makes between "belief" and emotion as it relates to fear and political agency. What I intended to do in the first stage of our work around *Pump Up the Volume!* was to take up Bartky's call for a "political phenomenology of the emotions" (p. 98) by exploring the linkage between acknowledging one's limits and Arendt's framing of action as a natality. Specifically, I wanted to focus on one kind of action, the *transgression* as framed by Chang. For me, the *transgression* is an important theme that could engage the students and us in *Pump Up the Volume!* I read the activities (see for example Appendix D 4 *Pump Up the Volume!* Written Responses) as a 'screeding out' of our sense of shame and guilt in being confronted by the transgression (as viewers of the film and as those who might engage the possibility for acting as socially interested subjects that it raises).

To explore the transgression, I thought it useful to discuss with the students the distinction between shame and guilt that Bartky struggles with in her work. While the distinction between shame and guilt is blurred for Bartky, she does see utility in positioning shame as "the distressed apprehension of oneself as a lesser creature" and guilt as focused on actions or perceived wrongdoings by the subject. "Shame is called forth by the apprehension of some serious flaw in the self, guilt by the consciousness that one has committed a transgression" (p. 87). This is critical in Bartky's sense of what often silences females; that there is "a condemnation of the self by itself for some failure to measure up; it is the measures that differ" (*Ibid.*).

Here lies a sense of the an emotion of fear, of acknowledged limits, of that which forms a boundary that women frequently choose not to cross. It is Bartky's claim that this is a sense or feeling that men share as well, the difference being that "the feeling itself has a different meaning in relation to their total psychic situation and general social location" (p. 84). In the work with the students I do not share Bartky's project to claim to come to understand such a thing as a "total psychic situation". I also resist the phenomenological construction of a full presence or a project

that tries to build *structures for feelings* (Grossberg, 1992, 62). (My critique of Massing's work in this regard was outlined in Chapter 5.) What I do share with Bartky is the recognition that feelings (attunements) have uniquely gendered representations in the locations that females find themselves in. In these locations, agency is problematized by the inability to acknowledge limits and the resultant inability to commit the transgression. The point is that I do not want to confuse the representations as the situated and embodied attunements themselves. The direction Grossberg suggests is a clear one in cultural studies. He argues not for a concern with "living reality" or how people experience that reality, but a concern for "how they live and act in ways which they have no control and about which they may be unaware, experientially as well as consciously. In this project experiences are not privileged they are to be treated as facts among other facts" (1992, pp. 62-63).

In the viewing of the film the following discussion questions were explored with the students. Our aim here was to begin to intersect a reading of a phenomenology of emotion with their meaning making in the film. The film was shown to the classes on our first two days together in this last cycle. As Rod's read back ` (May 13, Appendix D 3) suggests, the film provoked a variety of reactions both during and after viewing. On May 11, following the film, five oral discussion questions were reviewed with the students in each of the three classes. In only one class did we separate the males and females. Where significant, I have indicated student comments by gender. Following are the questions with a commentary on the student responses:

Question 1. Were there any points in the film where Hard Harry felt shame?

Many students indicated that Harry's inability to speak to Nora suggested his shame and frustration. One student commented, "he was pissed off at himself because he could not act the way he felt in front of Nora". Another remarked, "he was phony so he had to cover this up by being so gross on the radio." This was a striking comment since most students admired the *personae* of Hard Harry the radio DJ - the 'real' person however (Marc the quiet student) was thought much less of. "He's like so many of us" commented both female and male students - "wanting to say what we mean but not feeling they can." Throughout the student comments was a strong sense of living the double-life, of hiding oneself from others. The exception for students was "having friends that you could be yourself to" commented one student. Another remarked, "yeah, the more friends you have the more different you can be". This sparked a discussion in one group when students remarked how important it was that you have "at least a couple of friends otherwise you feel closed in and trapped." "Always going to the same parties," or "being labeled a jock" were traps that students saw in having only a few close friends. "Harry had no friends except for the lizard he spoke to," commented one student. "Yeah, but Nora drew him out of his shell," countered another.

Another commented, "It doesn't matter how many friends you have - you always get queered out or feel stupid when you do something stupid." There was no agreement on the "history" of Harry's shame - just as the students could not agree on their sense of why friends helped one be less prone to shame.

2. *Did you feel shame at any point in the film? (about the language used, the attitudes towards authority figures, the actions of some of the characters?)*

There were profound differences between the female and male students on this question. Many females said they felt embarrassed when Nora took off her shirt and approached Marc (a.k.a. Hard Harry). They commented on her "aggressiveness" towards him, and pointed out "he seemed intimidated - he kept backing away from her." "I would never come onto a guy like that" remarked several females. Yet other girls countered, "I wish I had her courage", "yeah she had balls" remarked another. Many of the males commented on Harry's numerous masturbation performances. On one scene a male student commented, "I thought he was really doing it - I was embarrassed but it was o-k when I saw that he was just pretending." The masturbation scenes were, for most students, sources of humour and amazement (as Rod's read back indicates). After the initial ambiguity of the camera angles passed students were able to "laugh-off" Slater's performances. When initially confronted with the possibility that these were "real" the three classrooms were stone silent.

While I had hoped that the students would engage this question in other areas, they did not. I had expected students to comment about their personal involvement in incidents that were similar to those depicted in the film (e.g. personal reminiscences of rebelling, standing hard, and so on).

These questions were to be raised in a more direct way in a subsequent student handout. We decided to tackle questions #3 and #4 together since in all three classes the students responded to them interchangeably.

3. *What role does guilt play in Hard Harry's actions? (e.g. when he decides to quit and then starts up again?)* 4. *Do you think guilt got Harry on the radio in the first place? Does guilt motivate us to act - to try to make things better?)*

One student commented, "Harry didn't want to let the students down at the end - even though he thought he was a screw-up." "Yeah, he felt that he screwed up Malcom (the student who commits suicide in the film) but he had no choice when Nora confronted him."

This was a common response for both male and female students, that " being confronted by Nora" shamed Marc into continuing. I was struck by the ability of the students to talk about their experiences of being shamed into doing something they did not want to. "When I get angry

at myself for not doing something I know I have to do, I get pissed off and do it". This remark was repeated in various forms throughout the classes by both males and females.

I wanted to explore this question further with the students. Were there differences in the ways males and females felt about this frustration with oneself? What of Bartky's claim that women "shame" themselves more than men and end up feeling guilty more often? Is the feeling of anger something that men allow themselves to express and thus catharticaly vent their own frustration with themselves and thus diminish their sense of shame? Is it anger women take into themselves, burrowing into themselves to feed their shame and guilt? Hopefully, I thought, these would be issues we could explore in the Written Responses and Student Assignments (see Appendix D 6-D 11, to be reviewed later).

5. Is shame or guilt something that motivates people like yourself to speak or to stand up for what you believe?

The students saw this as the same question as #4. They elaborated on the theme raised in their previous responses. One student summed up several student comments when she remarked, "there isn't much crap I have to put up with - my life is pretty good, but I know people who have a lot of bullshit to put up with. It is impossible for them. I think they either flip out or just bury themselves." I sensed that this was not a discussion best approached in a class setting. In the one class that we did separate, the discussion I had with the girls was the most open and frustrating. Several girls remarked on their understanding of shame and guilt - they saw too that the distinction is a blurred one. Yet in their comments they seemed to struggle to find a distinction that they could create for themselves in order to come to terms with the question of what causes them to act in some situations and sit back in others?

After discussing a number of issues around the school and community, they agreed that they only felt ashamed when there were things happening that they cared about. "Lots of stuff we are asked to care about is bullshit - like the constitution or Quebec." "Yeah, I'm more pissed off that we have to run in phys. ed. even when we have our periods, or that you can't get help in some courses without being made to feel like an idiot." "So don't ask me about power in government" commented one girl, "when I can't even do anything about my shitty (subject deleted) class". At this point the girls entered into a ten minute discussion of the various problems around the school that they wished "someone would do something about". I felt quite uncomfortable at this point - I wanted to leave the room and wanted to stay out. As a colleague of many of the teachers on staff being identified I could not sit and listen to this. There was in this moment a sense of Merleau-Ponty's *chiasm*, of being drawn into the other and out at the same time. This was a ruptured, ethically messy place for me. I expressed my discomfort to them at the names of teachers being used. The discussion ended. I sensed that The Stay Puffed Man had just turned

to goo. No longer was I someone who cared and listened. No one said anything, I sat there realizing that I could not let our conversation go on. The bell rang and I thanked the girls as they left. One of them remarked, "this was the best - can we talk about this stuff tomorrow?" I smiled and lied, "sure". Realizing that I had opened a box I could not ethically look into caused me frustration - yet, could I not come up with some clever ethical counter-argument that would allow our discussion to continue? Suddenly, I was somewhat ashamed that I was a teacher who was sworn to uphold the ethics of our profession. Yet I was also ashamed that I would have to let the girls down. In any direction I looked I felt unworthy of the trust they had (temporarily) placed in me.

So I am back to Hard Harry's question: "How far would you go to help someone?" These girls could have used some help. They did not ask for it, but am I not called to give it as a teacher? Or does my position as an invited guest (researcher) erase any location from which to act? Can I remain the Stay Puffed Man until I leave and crawl into a hole to write my thesis? There is, I sense, an erasure of my agency (of effecting some change). At this point as I realize how unspeakable being here at this moment really is. I share Hard Harry's fit of remorse as he claims over the air waves, "even this show isn't real... I'm a phony fuck just like my dad." Yet he is exhausted by his shame - "I'm not going to be ashamed anymore - its time to get crazy". Well, I am not ready to get crazy - not yet anyway. I am only caught in a postmodern allegory - of my own inevitable collusion with what I claim to resist and contest (Lather, 1991, p. 155). So maybe I am "a phony fuck" after all.

Thinking Hard! Writing Hard!

The second worksheet (see Appendix D 4 - Written Responses - *Pump Up the Volume!*) invited student written responses to elaborate on points raised in the class discussion and readings of the film that I introduced (in order to tease out issues related to gender and agency). On May 12 the students handed in their responses to the worksheet. Following is a review of the student work. For the specific wording of the questions refer to the worksheet.

The first question asked the students if a Hard Harry type of character could have been played by a girl. I playfully suggested a counter role - 'Hard Harriet' to give the students a sense of what the question was engaging. Of the 69 students who responded, 17 said "Yes" (7 males, 10 females) and 52 said "No" (22 males and 30 females). Roughly three times as many students said "No" as to "Yes", with the same ratio for male and female responses. So we found no differences between the students in terms of their overall responses. This was true in terms of the details and supporting reasons given. Several males gave quite brief and pragmatic answers, such as, "she would not be taken seriously", or "girls cannot get away with being so vulgar." Several females alluded to the "fact" that such a character would be labeled as "slut or bitch" and

be totally ignored. One student quite cleverly pointed to the reaction of the class to Nora in the film (who was given the title the "Eat Me, Beat Me Girl"). The student remarked, "the class found her name rather appalling and most girls found her too aggressive - although in a jealous way we envied her." What the question represented to many students, was the issue of "proper or acceptable behavior". What struck me was the number of responses that generalized the attitudes of the whole population. This points to a problem in the question - perhaps I should have asked for their personal reactions to the possibility of a female playing the role.

Yet the responses reveal a keen understanding of the problematics of acting in the world - of going forward to be the first. As one male student commented, "vulgarity, sarcasm and extreme entertainment - that's what the world wants - girls don't have this like a guy like Hard Harry does."

I liked this line - *extreme entertainment*. A girl commented, " vulgarity in our society shows you're brave enough to do something - you are not ashamed anymore. Most girls choose not to be this way." Another girl added, "vulgarity is a sign of individualism". "Vulgarity shows you are willing to take risks, to overcome being shamed into being the nice one," added another. There is a powerful, almost unspeakable tension on this issue for the students. At one level I am reminded of Kristeva's sense of what happens when we "resist the desire of the Other" as represented through political and analytical interpretation (Kristeva, 1986, pp. 302-307). Are these girls attempting to fill the void of their lack of identification with vulgarity and Hard Harry by defining his agency as *not theirs*? This is done by some of the girls by transferring Hard Harry's vulgarity to the phallus - of which they are lacking.

There is a dangerous cachet in the interpretation I am helping to weave with the students at this point. We are struggling for One Meaning - a representation of Hard Harry as a masturbating delinquent fool. In this way we are in danger of foreclosing on the possibilities of ourselves being the abject, the unnamable, the Happy Harry Hard On. Instead we retreat behind the phallus to give it back to Harry and deny ourselves the possibility of becoming what only he can afford to become- the incoherent unstable subject. Meanwhile we remain mired in our own stable identities. So I called these students to the film as a way of achieving "Meaning as it is by delirium" (p. 319), as Kristeva calls us to shed The True Meaning, the totalizing effects of the 'Word becoming flesh'. Yet I sense this has happened again as we 'analyze' Hard Harry with the modernist discourses that suggest we can know the character Hard Harry in one way - as the abject.

I am intrigued by the number of girls who claim that a female can play at being Hard Harry. One girl remarks, "why not let everyone know how you feel , that's what it's all about, isn't that what pumping up the volume means?" "Horny Holly - she could do the job" claimed another. I recall Camille Paglia's recovery of the "animality and artifice" that she sees in a new erotic voice

and body for women (1992). Given the criticism by many feminists leveled against Paglia for her embracing sexuality as a tool to be actively used by women, I am reluctant as a male to take up her call under the threat of being labeled a 'non-feminist.' Yet one cannot deny the pragmatic realism of one female student who wrote, "this would be great having a girl in this part. No one would suspect her (she could be passive and lay-low by day, and Slick Chick by night). Besides, if the police caught her, they would probably be a lot easier on her." As I read over this remark I am struck by tendency to erase this as fanciful meanderings. Yet, this can be looked on as a voice from a postmodern location that is not one of "illusion or innocence" (Flax, 1992, pp. 445-463), but a voice that struggles as we all do, to "situate ourselves within contingent and imperfect contexts" (p. 460).

Whatever their responses to the possibility of Hard Harry being a girl, I did not anticipate the female students' appropriation of Hard Harry as a persuasive model for agency. What I did hope for was an opportunity for a re-telling of the story from their contingent positions. In a small way, this summary of their responses indicates in a limited sense, the diversity of their embodied, situated knowledge as Donna Haraway might describe it (Haraway, 1988). The second question asked the students to explore vulgarity and its efficacy as a political strategy for Hard Harry and themselves. I also raised the question of the construction of Hard Harry's vulgarity in terms of a deliberate play by Hollywood to "appeal to you as a young person." Yet a third element of the question served to interrupt the questions: "is this a stupid question?". I employed this as a strategy to momentarily displace my dominant positionality - by getting to ask the questions I had the opportunity to establish many of the centers of our conversations.

The students were overwhelming in support of Hard Harry's strategic deployment of vulgarity. Typical was the remark, "most of us talk this way anyway, so what's the big deal." "Hard Harry's vulgarity was an expression of his freedom" wrote another student. "Vulgarity is a way of getting hard and appearing hard", suggested a female student. Importantly in her response to the question of whether or not a girl could have been a Hard Harry, this student felt that vulgarity was a strategy that a girl could have easily used but to a lesser extent. Time and again, students identified the utility of vulgarity as a strategy for "getting the attention of all the kids." Students stressed that "even if some of the stuff was gross to me, others might find it great - like the masturbating or the talk of the gay kid". Another student wrote, "yeah, I thought some of the kids who wrote letters were vulgar but like the title of the movie says - Pump Up the Volume means letting everybody speak."

As mentioned earlier a particular concern was Nora's overt sexuality - a number of female students expressed a *chiasm* towards her. One student quoted Nora's letter to Harry ("jam me, jack me, push me, pull me. Talk hard") in expressing her sense of "amazement" at Nora and a wish "I could be so brave." Is this a small indication of the claim by de Lauretis that "an erotic and

ethical drive may be seen to underlie and sustain at once the possibility of, and the difficulties involved in, the project of articulating a female symbolic" (De Lauretis, 1990, p. 266).

As one female student wrote , "like Harry said, he is inside of all of us." At one point in the film after reading fan mail and poetry from his listeners, Harry comments, "I like the idea that a voice can go anywhere...like a virus"; Nora is listening in her bed as she recites her poetry. Harry laments that he "never planned it like this". I read for Hard Harry and Nora a sense of natality, of pushing beyond the limits and of not knowing what comes next. There is more here than a dialogical synthesis of an adolescent heterosexual coupling; I see what de Lauretis calls "undecidability, conceptual as well as pragmatic, of the alternatives *as given*" (p. 267).

These highly problematic alternatives are framed in the tensions that Hard Harry and Nora sense for themselves. For Harry, he laments, "sex is out, drugs are out, politics is out." Nora writes to Hard Harry - "my insides spill on your altar" and threatens, "come to me or I'll come to you." For one female student, playing out alternatives shapes her subjectivity as a polysemic one; " you are different depending on the people you are with. When I am at home I'm different than with my friends." Playing out alternatives 'as given' is indicated by another student on a more mundane level; "When I go shopping I look at things I like and then I remember I live in Greystone, and it probably wouldn't go over very well so I put it back. If I was living in a big city, it would have been part of my wardrobe."

I do not wish to collapse sexuality performativity with choosing clothes. What I do want to suggest, is the entanglement of alternatives *as given* that constitute the subject positions of these students as they struggle with the codes of what Barthes calls the "collective representations" (Barthes, 1972, p. 11). So, Hard Harry may be "in all of us" as one student indicated, but this is the point: Hard Harry as a coded narrative must move through us - his narrative takes place through us as subjects. As Jonathan Culler states, human subjectivity cannot be erased so easily by the structuralists, for the subject, "may no longer be the origin of meaning, but meaning must move through him" (Culler, 1975, p. 30). This distinction is an important one for me in coming to some understanding of the student responses to vulgarity. As I read the student comments I sense their presence being given new meanings and their meanings being given new presence. Their fears are those that are here, now.

A number of students commented that the "real" vulgarity was on the part of the parents and those in positions of authority in the school depicted in the film. In their reading of the film, "the school officials were the vulgar ones" in their treatment of students. Other students commented on the deliberateness of the construction of vulgarity as a way to get their attention: "vulgarity has an effect on me - it makes me listen," and "without the vulgarity it would have been just another radio station" were indicative comments. One student playfully summed it up, "to be heard you need to be hard."

The third question asked students to imagine that they were a copycat of Hard Harry in their community. What would be "two issues that your program would focus on?" While the student topics varied widely in terms of how they were described, the following general categories and frequencies were recorded from the 138 responses from the three classes (45 females and 24 males).

1. Personal Relationships: 40 responses (being yourself, being happy (16), friendships (8), personal problems (8), parental problems (5), others (3)
   (Females - 29, Males 11)
2. Sex : 30 responses (contraception and pregnancy (22), date rape (4),AIDS (2) (others 2)
   (Females - 24 Males 6)
3. School 28 responses (the attendance policy (14), poor attitude of teachers/administration (7), the "no hat rule" (3), others (4)
   (Females - 20, Males 8)
4. Drugs (including alcohol use): 24 responses (varied descriptions)
   (Females - 10 Males 14)
5. Pollution from the local mill: 10 responses
   (Females - 5 Males 5)
6. Community Issues: 6 responses (boring town (2), dirty (2) , other (2)
   (Females - 2 Males 4)

In this survey Rod and I were not looking for specific differences between the male and female responses in this informal breakdown of program themes. Given the open ended nature in which the students were allowed to write in their themes, categorizing them was problematic (e.g. some topics related to "sex" could have fit under "Personal Relationships"). The survey done at the beginning of our action research in February (reported in Chapter 3) is probably more useful in drawing comparisons.

There were differences worth noting however. Few females identified program themes around pollution, drug/alcohol use, and community concerns. Overwhelmingly, the females ranked Personal Relationships, Sex, and School Issues as being most important (as did the entire group of students). For the females, use of drugs/alcohol was seen to be much less of an issue than it was for the males. This difference is especially pronounced when one compares it to a survey completed recently by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (Holmes, 1992). In that survey young women rated drugs, relationships, school, self and the environment as their top five issues that they expressed concern about (p. 72). Clearly, at the local level, the young women in the three classes were more concerned about personal relationships and school rather than environmental issues (e.g. the pollution from the mill). Without getting bogged down

in a war of statistical interpretation, it is perhaps worth noting that our question was framed differently than the survey question of the Holmes study. We asked students to select issues they would like to see talked about on a local radio program. The Advisory Council Survey asked students to identify "five concerns/problems/fears" at a general level. The obvious differences between the two groups suggest to me a powerful argument for locating opportunities for political engagement at the local level where issues are recognizable and intelligible. Of course, the broader issue of what is acceptable as an issue in the social studies curriculum needs to be discussed further. (Chapter 3 explored this question in detail.)

What was most interesting for Rod and I reading the student responses was the variety of themes that they picked up on from the film and cross-read them to their experience in Greystone. This is perhaps the risk involved in textual poaching - to ask students to inject their subjectivity with a film such as *Pump up the Volume!* perhaps gives them the impression that there are "right answers" to the question. Many students phrased their program themes in ways that Hard Harry did, appropriating his framing of the lived experience of the teen as "being screwed up in a screwed up place." Yet, in discussing their responses, the students assured us that these were "our real interests". As I question the students about this I wonder about the voice that I may be trying to speak for them, *the male voice of how one should act or think.* Reminded of voice as "inherently relational", and that it "joins psyche and culture," (Brown and Gilligan, 1992, p. 20), I resist their claim that these are their "own stories". Yet, this questioning is perhaps the beginning of a dialogue (although difficult in a classroom setting) that situates me as "naming" their reported experiences, and encouraging them to question me as much as I question them.

In explaining my doubts about their responses, one student responded, "maybe Hard Harry matters to some of us more than others." Again I was reminded that the discussion was with a class and not individuals - there was indeed a great diversity in their responses and I had fallen into the trap of over-generalizing my sense of their responses. Was this a poststructuralist interrogation of them - framing them as bodies that are seamless "sites" of "disciplinary power"? (A succinct description of the poststructuralist project by Bordo, 1992, p. 167.) Did I read their responses as Derrida might have (p. 167) - the Hard Harry as the invading sperm, waiting for the eggs (their responses to the film)? This is messy work as I realize that I am using the students as a focal point for my own narrative, but they resist being written as "eggs". The thing is this - despite the action research project, despite the writing and discussion with the students, we will both continue on as we did before, fabricating the "everyday artifacts of culture" (Bordo, 1992, p. 168), being complicit and subversive as the occasion calls for it. The students, Rod, and I continue in the agonism of action research.

This takes me to the last question that Rod and I explored with the students; inviting students

to make any comments on the film or our work to date. Many students expressed pleasure with the film and thought it was "interesting and realistic." One student remarked, "speaking out as a teen is good. I love people who take the risk; who jump off the cliff and take a chance." Another student remarked, "it showed how important it was to follow through right to the end." While only two-thirds of the students responded to the question, there was a wide variety of responses to the different aspects of our work with the film. One female student, reacting to the class discussion of the film wrote; "It seemed like everyone thought that when Nora removed her shirt she was acting like a slut - I don't think so! Both her and Harry had a hard way of communicating with words, this was her way of communicating with him by actions. It was a cool touch to add to the film; it represented a lot about the film."

Individual students wrote about their reactions to characters in the film or to situations they found themselves in or that were tied to the film. Several students pointed out that the film was a "little extreme for Greystone since things are good here" but that "it was pretty realistic in other ways." One of the most telling comments came from one student who suggested that "in a way, the film seemed too big for itself because it raised some very interesting concerns, and in a way, the plot was secondary to the theme." The student went on to remark that Harry had a "serious message... that we lived in a bored and exhausted society. But this got lost in the movie because in a way he was too cool. "

Reading this comment I was reminded by a remark made in one of the discussions following the film. One female student remarked, "one of the reasons most of us don't complain is that we don't feel big enough - no one notices us." Without over determining the two comments about "the film being "too big" and the female students not feeling "big enough," I was left with a sense of the contrast here: Hard Harry's strong presence (confronting and struggling with his fears) contrasted to the feeling of being small expressed by several female students. (Recall that the comments were made in relation to changes sought at school; to the attendance policy and physical education.) This feeling of knowing the problem but feeling one has little influence has been well documented in the research (Holmes, 1992, p. 83) and described in Chapter One.

As our discussion of the student work ended Rod and I made the final preparations for the last student activity. This was to invite them to read back to the film through a variety of individual and group projects. As the Student Activity Outline indicates (see Appendix D 5), a wide variety of options were provided. These included a presentation about a character or event that evoked the experience of *talking hard*, producing a local version of the *Hard Harry Show!* on audiotape, reviewing an article about 'female voice', and a written anecdote about talking hard. In the following, the work by the students will be explored as possibilities for reading *talking hard, standing hard* as affective investments that powers the transgression of the limit, in the natality of going forward as socially interested subjects.

Talking Hard! Standing Hard!

The first option students were invited to respond to proved very popular with the students. About half of the students selected this choice. One student reported "this one let's us write about stuff we know about - us." Many of the papers involved descriptions of situations where students felt confronted with a dilemma or "hard choice" as one student wrote - to act or not act. Only five papers dealt specifically with historical or contemporary examples of talking hard! Students seemed more willing to write about their own experiences, particularly as one student remarked, "this probably involves less work since we don't have go to the library." Unfortunately, several students interpreted the (b) option as merely telling a short story or brief anecdote. Some of these stories lacked any development or connection to the assignment. Some were quite perfunctory (two or three short paragraphs) while others ran on for several pages.

I have included three examples in Appendix D 6 to D 8 that took up option 1 a. In "Talking Hard/Standing Hard" (D 6) the student deploys Mandela as an example of someone who is ready to "suffer the consequence" of speaking up. While the student demonstrates a vague understanding of Mandela (there is a reference to his being "constantly being arrested"), the student did attempt to specifically identify the "costs" of standing hard. What I see in the student's response is the potential to explore the life of Mandela (and others) to recover in their experiences, the impetus to transgress the limit. Perhaps by requiring a more detailed review of the individual's life, the student could have elaborated on many of his generalizations: "many dislike those who rebel against authority." The other student papers that explored the lives of others suffered because of this lack of detail and rich description.

"Black Sheep Talk Hard" (D 7), because it draws on the background knowledge of the student, is much more evocative and detailed. In this paper, this female student describes an incident where she demonstrated her ability to "stand up for myself and express my own opinions." Calling forth to her "the same rights and responsibilities as any Canadian citizen," the student describes a job interview where "she began to Talk Hard." In her paper the student injects *talking hard* with the connotation of being different, of being the "black sheep" as opposed to the "white sheep." In my first reading of this analogy I must admit to a sense of ambivalence to her use of "sheep" as a metaphor for people in society, especially given her optimism stated in the opening paragraph that "the nineties are opening more doors to those that would never have let their opinions be known."

A common theme in several papers was the situation students found themselves in with their friends and acquaintances at parties. Four girls wrote about their experiences saying "no" to drugs and alcohol. The example in the Appendix D 8, "Hard Time/Good Time?" illustrates this recurring theme. The female student recalls where she was not having a good time because she refused to get "drunk". Standing up to peer pressure is a strong theme in this paper. What was

striking from the papers submitted was how common this sort of incident was. Several male students wrote about similar experiences as well, feeling the pressure to drink is especially hard on them since the "guys call you a wimp." One paper, "Being Hard" evokes the problem of looking at one's feelings at some risk. "This is very hard to do because you have to examine yourself and you have to follow up on your feelings. If they are opposite to the group then you must not be afraid of what they will say."

In other papers students spoke about experiences where they now had doubts about deciding not to act. One poignant story was told by a male student who was working with four other female workers at a local fast food outlet. One of the girls was sexually harassed by a customer but the young man felt troubled about what to do. He concluded his story, "Now that it's over with I wish I would have Talked Hard even if it meant losing my job." Another student writes, "those who lead get either a pat on the back or get stabbed in the back."

Reading Broken Voices/Broken Stories

As I read these stories I was struck continually by their strategic deployment of pun and metaphor. There are the juxtapositions of images and contradictions that students often illustrate; simultaneously being drawn toward *talking hard* and worrying about getting 'stabbed in the back'. Many students echoed a concern that standing up for what was right often gets them into trouble with friends. Asking students to Stand Hard or Talk Hard brings on discontinuity, rupture and rebuke. Given the codes that enable them to construct a text of resistance (e.g. *Talking Hard, Standing Hard*) they readily incorporate this into their own subjectivity as a text. Yet they know from within their own subjectivity, that resistance and rupture have psychic and physical costs. These costs involve getting "stabbed in the back" by one's peers or strangers, and the chance of being betrayed by adults previously trusted. As the one doing the writing about these experiences I am aware that for both the males and females, there are a multiplicity of subjectivities that weigh such costs and bear down on their sense of shame and guilt; their sense of being enmired in conflictual situations that threaten to silence, to occlude their agency.

I cannot bear responsibility for the decisions that these students have made. Yet as an educator claiming to want to enter this space, am I prepared for the struggles, the affective investments made, in these sites? It is bell hooks who reminds me of where I am *standing* as compared to where these students have stood as I write about these students' experiences (hooks, 1990, pp. 145-153). For hooks, "the effort to speak about 'space and location' evoked (a) pain" that causes us to hear what seems to be "a broken voice" (pp. 145-147). In my effort to read into dispersed and fragmentary sites of subjectivity previously ignored by the public school, am I able to convey anything really significant about the experiences of Standing Hard? As with hooks, I too find "so many gaps, absences in this written text" (p. 147), that serve to erase the

presence and location that gives the Other what it owns - pain. hooks talks of meeting in the middle, of avoiding the temptation to appropriate the Other under some rubric of "voice of resistance" or some other thing named for the Other.

As I write I must ask the same question hooks asks - am I positioning myself to erase my own "wound", my own "deprivation?" Reading through many of the students' stories may have allowed this erasure. Yet one particular student did not permit this erasure to continue. In her "Speech to Mom," (see Appendix D 9) this female student reveals a moment of talking hard to her estranged mother. Following a divorce, the student wonders why her mother will not speak to her anymore; "I got the impression she was embarrassed to have me as her daughter." Writing a speech to her mother, the student presented it to a local chapter of Toastmasters. Following a confrontation with her mother, the student now feels "that she (her mother) likes to be a mom and knows how to treat her children."

So how do I share with this student an experience that has hurt me? So far in the classroom I have told stories of personal experiences "standing hard" in high school or in university. I have related stories from history - Gandhi's program of passive resistance as "standing hard". Yet nothing I could offer the student would be of the "unfulfilled longing" that hooks speaks. So what am I to make of the postmodern yearning for a border pedagogy that positions teachers "to deal with the plethora of voices, and the specificity and organization of differences" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991, p. 130)? Aronowitz and Giroux employ seductive metaphors for their pedagogy of border crossing: excavating, reterritorializing, and counter memories (p. 131). Yet I must stand with Ellsworth. Her decentering and problematizing of their "critical pedagogy" unmasks the teacher positioned as one who pulls emancipatory pedagogical possibilities as if they were rabbits out of a hat.

As I read back the story "Speech to Mom" can I find anything to say? In order to avoid telling *the story* of this student should I cleverly spin four tales as Lather does (1991) , following van Maanen (1988)? These four tales include a realist tale, a critical tale, a deconstructive tale and a reflexive tale. These four tales remind me that I cannot dialogue, I can only intersect in a highly fractal manner, the subjectivity that is presented to me as I read the "Speech to Mom."

A realist tale would have me finding the student committing the transgression, crossing the limit; she would be discovered in my frame of reference - captured in the thesis like a fly locked in amber for all to see. A critical tale would interrogate the student's relation to determining structures; the breakdown of the family, the collapse of nuturance in the face of a society imploding upon on itself. A deconstructivist tale would problematize my whole thesis question: do students actually care about achieving societal change through taking Social Studies 30? Maybe they would rather just worry about getting good marks on the Diploma Exams. As one student said, "this is what is important in Grade 12." Finally, a reflexive tale might involve a

story about myself that displays my own tentativeness as I struggle with these questions that haunts much of my work with the students: "Was this a space I should have entered? Who am I to enter? What will I bring, what will I take away?"

Rather than tales I deploy a poem; a poem that seeks to reveal the erasures of "a semiotical memory, a fall of notes":

> Who is there?
> an infinite set of voices, I guess
> a versification
> a curriculum made of signs
> and notes
> the world weave
> a semiotical memory
> struggling
> with the noise
> a fall of notes
> escaping the symbolic order. (Daignault, 1989, p. 131).

To enter the space of the Other is a political act. Yet this is where I have come to. Several students reveal their frustrations with teachers. Their stories are compelling - one of them full of anger at "wasting an entire semester." Now I become aware of my duplicity - as a teacher who is bound by a professional code of conduct, I feel prohibited from pursuing these matters. Now I am located in the margins - I cannot hide my frustration and yet I cannot act upon it in a pedagogical matter. I feebly suggest to the students that they might take up the matter with the school administration. They reply sarcastically, "yeah, right."

I became further injected into the project as I reviewed the student responses to the second option - student tapes of their own "Hard Harry" radio programs. The nine tapes presented varied in length from ten to twenty-five minutes. The number of male and female students who completed tapes was the same. All of the programs copied the Hard Harry format with variations. Two programs, both produced by girls, 'revealed' the stories of two female students that were having affairs with teachers in the school. As I listened I grew distressed - what have I opened up here? What if these stories are based on actual experiences? I wanted these stories not to be true - I would have to talk with the students about this.

What was striking about the radio programs was the eclectic and wide-ranging characterizations and music deployed by the students in preparing the tapes. Nympho Nancy opened her show with Madonna's *Erotica* and proceeded to give advice to a caller about the caloric expenditures of various sexual positions. Another caller complains that her boyfriend has an undescended testicle. In another program. Sherry 69/69 gives her callers advice about the dangers of getting drunk at parties - "you're in big trouble if you pass out!". Another caller complains about guys in general "being assholes". The host rebounds - "no problem for me since

I'm the hooked on a finger chick." In the background Tina Turner belts out, "I Need a Man".

I read in these performances, the installation of the strategies used by Hard Harry. These are gendered counter-memories that parody the film *Pump Up the Volume!*, consuming the phallus through subversion and excess. I draw on Hutcheon's use of parody in the visual arts as strategy to subvert the dominant discourse that females find themselves written into (Hutcheon, 1989, p. 150). Yet as a practical postmodern strategy, parody raises many questions that problematizes the role of Rod and I as researchers. What is our position as listeners - voyeuristic? As males what of our gazing upon the performativity of the "hooked on a finger chick" and Nympho Nancy? While I had intended Hard Harry as a an object to manipulate and subvert, has the outcome been a "Tootsie trope" (p. 159), where their work has failed under the powerful gaze and management of Hard Harry? So to be represented do these girls have to do so in ways subsumed in a masculine position? As the Lacanians might ask, are they merely miserable Hard Harrys that lack a phallus?

I do not suppose to answer these questions but to let the students speak into the question. I do so with a sense that Butler sees the subject mired in but not constituted by discourse (Butler, 1990, p. 143). "The culturally enmired subject negotiates its constructions, even when those constructions are the very predicates of its own identity" (*Ibid.*). There is an enabling or agency that Butler frames around this assumption that subjects are enmired; "just as bodily surfaces are enacted as the natural, so these surfaces can become the site of a dissonant and denaturalized performance that reveals the performative status of the natural itself" (p. 146). For Butler, parody can be deployed as strategies to re-engage and reconstitute that which is given to woman.

Crucial to this deployment is the interruption of the dominant repetitions that act to reinscribe what is given to woman. Exaggeration and interruption can act to reveal the "phantasmatic status" of gender identity (p. 147). (A concrete example of such a disruptive interruption might be *The Crying Game* when the male protagonist is seduced by a transvestite. I read in the film though, a deep seated (heterosexual) ambivalence to his reaction - unable to respond to her sexually he does become her friend.)

In much of the programming the females put together, there is a deliberate parody of not only Hard Harry but of our action research as well. Perhaps their laughter (and that of Rod and myself) is the consequence of our realization that they are copying an original (Hard Harry) that was derived from a copy itself. This, as Butler reminds, is the subversive and troubling effect of parody - it domesticates and recirculates the "instruments of cultural hegemony" (p. 139). One program, Who Cares? framed the life of local teenagers as being "dreadful" with callers commenting on a range of problems: sexual abuse at the hands of step-fathers and teachers, to friends back-stabbing one another." When one caller asks who "makes all the decisions?", the D-J replies, "the suits ... in Parliament, everywhere." When I asked the girls about their program they

commented - "things are great for us - Hard Harry just seemed something to have fun with. We made up half the stuff, but some was really true stuff!" I sensed in their comments a working of the text within a text, of Hard Harry within their location in the action research project.

Another group revealed that the "stuff about teachers was made up - we wanted to make our program juicy like Hard Harry's". Actually one group of girls copied an interview from an issue of *YM* magazine (July, 1993, p. 30). They presented the story "I'm Sleeping with my Step-father" because "they wanted something gross to talk about. The normal stuff in our lives would be too boring." They did not volunteer this information about lifting the story until I asked them about it. Just as Butler warned about language swallowing everything (1990), in a way the codes of *Pump Up the Volume!* came to swallow everything in our action research for some students. For this group of girls their lives seemed "boring" so they constructed a phantasm that would be appropriate for my consumption. At this point I wonder if what I thought was parody by many students, was for them mere pastiche? Jameson's distinction in "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" (1983, p.114), between pastiche and parody is a useful one here. For Jameson, there is no original, only copies of a copy. Pastiche mimics as a "dead language", "without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something normal compared to that what is being imitated". Parody is copying with a motive, it assumes there is something there to point to. "Pastiche is blank parody, parody that has lost its humour" (Ibid.).

So I wonder about these students who serve up much of what has been dished out to them. As Fiske reminds me, as much as the social order constrains people, it also gives them the resources to fight back (Fiske, 1992). In this case, the social order I have brought into the classroom is that of action research "getting into your place". Yet what of the many students who do not want this? Obviously, within the sensibility of a postmodern suspicion, much more questioning of the work students have provided me with would be warranted. Yet in our follow-up discussions in class and in one on one conversations throughout the week, I was encouraged by their humour and commitment to the work. As a teacher, I have found these two ingredients have usually marked a successful classroom.

The question of pastiche was an important one in reviewing the programs submitted by the male students. After listening to the three tapes submitted, I discussed with them my observation that they seemed to mimic unabashedly from Hard Harry's programs. Their response was more interesting than the programs. One student responded, "sure - we loved what Harry was doing, compared to what we have to deal with his programs were great." "Yeah, I'm not going to make a tape about the stupid attendance policy here - that's boring." Another commented, "besides, everything we thought of Harry did better." When the student made this remark I thought back to Hard Harry's comment, "all the great themes have been exhausted." Perhaps for these students they sensed this exhaustion imploding in on themselves as we completed the last activity of what

was over three weeks of classes. Rod and I shared this perception that maybe we "were all getting exhausted." Overall, the radio programs represented the highlight of the student work in this project. Despite my reservations raised earlier, the contributions made by many of the girls revealed an ability to engage *Pump Up the Volume!* in a vigorous and authentic way. While several thought their problems to be small and less dramatic, many of them engaged them seriously and with candor. The fact that the males had the greatest difficulty engaging the radio program in another way, than through mimicry, indicates that they may have not taken the work as seriously. I compare a male student's comment that "it seemed easy to be like Harry so we copied him", compared to a female student who pointed out, "I knew we couldn't copy him because he was a guy."

The third option of reviewing an article, "Talking Straight and Speaking Equal" was taken up by only three students. Three female students responded to the article by reviewing its main conclusion, that English is a language given to girls as "Manglish." None of the responses were long enough to include specific experiences or examples that supported the writer's contention that, in the words of one student, "the article is a roundabout way of urging females to talk hard." The students who responded to this assignment simply reviewed the article and provided few personal responses. One of the most observations made by one student was that she disagreed with the article's tendency to "lump all girls together. Not all of us have trouble speaking up - I find it easy because I'm tall. Most of the girls that I know who are tall are this way." I was reminded of a previous comment of one girl not "feeling big enough to speak."

The last option presented to the students was describing an experience of *talking hard!* in private, less obtrusive ways. While only five students responded to this option, their contributions revealed an ability of students to choose places in the margins in which to speak. I never considered *talking hard!* as having a complement - *hard silence!;* but one student opened this possibility for me. Her story, "Writing Hard" (see Appendix D 10) evokes for me a place where there is a space where vulnerability becomes its own object, where the student resists in a way that silence is eloquent in its refusal. Yet there is a strong scent of resistance here in "writing hard" in her journal. "Nothing goes unmentioned" for me was a powerful deployment of what I would like to describe as acknowledging one's limits while suturing in the transgression within these limits.

I read "Writing Hard" as an expression of the affective investment. Does the journal, for this student, become a tactic of resistance, (after de Certeau, 1984)? Tactics are the option of the nomad - those with no agency, those that cannot direct the forces of power in society so are reduced to acting in liminal sites (the journal). There is here as well, Arendt's sense of creating something new in the world - her stories stand as a natality where "nothing goes unmentioned." Within "the shell" that the student has constructed I read stories of anger and frustration. Yet I

also resist trying to read the student as I gaze upon her paper, we do not share a "coeval terrain" (Lather, 1991, p. 163) where a shared story could bring understanding to both of us. If I was pretentious enough to understand her loneliness could I bring myself to act upon it? Should I read her story as "an invitation to a teacher who "might help, " or a letter to a stranger who is not a threat since he'll be gone next week"? I choose to believe that she meets me "half-way" and retreats to her silence. I share the letter with Rod and he chooses to follow-up on it. This is his class, these are his students. I am the outsider (from the academic habitus). There is the refuge of the external action researcher who cannot (must not?) forget the boundaries. My limitations and practical entanglements here are embodied in my sense of what a pedagogical relationship ought to be with a student. Yet I am caught in a web that I cannot extricate myself from. My own emotions (attunements) call me back to the question of appropriateness - what should I have done? Jane Flax writes about the difficulty in framing "theoretical and narrative choices... without recourse to 'truth' or domination" because the "interpretation of meaning is not purely a private or unbounded process, but the rules may be so much a part of the game that it is hard to bring them to consciousness. Nor can the rules be understood solely within or generated by language because language and discursive rules both reflect and are located with complex contexts of social relations and power" (Flax, 1990, p. 222). Turning on the inside and on the outside, entanglement remains my location.

Another example of student work, "Deadly Make-Up" (see Appendix D 11) offers a strategy that I read in different ways. By substituting lipstick for bullets the student tactically uses that which is given to her as a woman - cosmetics. The student's foregrounds her transgression with "having a smirk on my face." Is this the act of the cyborg who experiences her body as a map "of power and identity" (Haraway, 1990, p. 222) that she reads to carefully plot her strategy? "To this day, they haven't said a word" the student writes. Hers is the guile of the woman with lipstick and a pretty smile. Is hers the power given to women - not reprimanded for her transgression, but further isolated from the world of men (the hunters?). I want to call on Haraway's sense that a "cyborg body is not innocent; it was not born in a garden; it does not seek unitary identity " (*Ibid.*). Yet there is risk in this writing of the student as cyborg.

Some hesitations

As I close on the reading of the student responses to *Pump Up the Volume!* I am called back to the seductiveness of a critical pedagogy that seeks to write in for the students, responses that can be conflated within descriptions that build the action research project as a linear narrative of a new liberatory curriculum possibility. So I resist reading these students as potential "young cyborgs", as might Giroux and McLaren (1992, p. 26). Despite their skillful surfing through deconstruction, feminism, and postmodernism, Giroux and McLaren leave the impression that

they are dazzled by the headlights of their own brilliance. How else do I read the call to "map the more fluid boundaries of the postmodern self as constituted within the new technologies and virtual realities", while at the same time help "educators develop a language that does not textualize social reality such that they palliate the ground of historically concrete social relations from which real rebellion and resistance might occur?" (p. 28).

What I have found in working through *Pump Up the Volume!* with the students, is ourselves, enmired in discourse that we suture and are sutured into. We are the object and the subject, the text within text. But we *are* that which text must pass through. So I am left troubled by Giroux and McLaren as they on the one hand frame the subject as "constituted" but call forth a yearning for a "concrete social relations." There is a contradiction in calling for building something concrete (social relations) out of selves that are not real, not *hard.*

There is a language that Giroux and McLaren call forward. "Teachers require a critical language for students who are growing up in cyperspace" (p. 28). (I wonder where these two live if not in the same cyberspace with the rest of us?) I share their sense that such a new language must be produced and circulated, but it will not be fixed on tropes of "students as cyborgs" and "geographies of identity." While Giroux and McLaren continually call for educators and cultural workers to deploy "a critical pedagogy of language of experience", as prospective geographers they are a little vague on the terrain that will mark such locations where, in their words, "educational, political, economic, and cultural justice" can be achieved *(Ibid).* Even if after reviewing their work, I knew what such 'justice' meant (which I do not), I still would not know how to get there.

What I offer in this chapter is a reading of one attempt to open up politics *as something that will find us, not something that we have to look for.* As living through the project of *Pump Up the Volume!* has shown me, I can only proceed with a sense that in every risk there is the possibility of a new beginning. We can share what Lather claims for Ellsworth's project of being "always in the position of beginning again" (her words borrowed from Foucault) (Lather, 1991 (c) , p. 105). This "beginning again" is a renewal that Arendt's sense of natality speaks about to me.

In our readings of *Pump Up the Volume!,* I found with many of the students, a sense of both acknowledging our limits and of transgressing them. This marks for me, a possible location for conveying the affective investments made in our lives. This becomes then, a curriculum that claims to speak about politics, security, and agency as if bodies mattered. These are bodies written with shame and guilt, bodies with flesh, bodies that do not believe as much as they fear.

CHAPTER 8
STRUGGLING TOWARDS A "FINAL VOCABULARY"

Getting Mired in "Deep Shit"?

In the preface to her recent book on self-esteem, Gloria Steinem makes the admission that it was only after completing the manuscript that she discovered she was drawn to the topic "not only because other people needed it, but because I did" (Steinem, p. 6). Part of her project then becomes to explore in her writing "a pervasive empathy sickness (knowing what other people are feeling better than we know what we are feeling)" (p. 4). This "empathy sickness" was for Steinem, an indication of the "deep shit" all of us are in as we ignore our own subject positions, our own personal difficulties while trying to write about the Other. This sense of being mired in "deep shit" points to my difficulty in looking back on my description of the action research project. Modernist linear story-telling assumptions tempted me at times to describe things 'as they were' - students engaged in a feminist/postmodernist reading of social studies. Yet throughout such writing I remain enmired in my own position as a researcher/teacher, injecting his subjectivity in the life-world of others. I can only walk away writing nothing more than an allegory that *writes in* a coherency over many possible other stories.

Writing educational action research remains a troublesome activity because it can easily slide into efforts to define the objects which speak to us. The intervention into the lives of students under the name of "action research" has been written in this thesis as a "feminist postmodern project." Such exhausted markers as *feminism* and *postmodernism* Cornell calls "code-words" that can "overwrite" important moral and ethical considerations (1992, p. 11). Has this 'overwriting' occurred in my work? On the last day with the students, I asked them if they had any final questions. One student asked "it will be weird to see some of our stuff collected together in a book type thing." Another jumped in, "yeah, then you can tell us what we did?" The student was quite serious - and I realized then the "deep shit" I was in. Several others asked about their photo essays and wanted to know what I would do with them. "Are you going to hang them up in your office at the university?" one student playfully asked. I wondered about these questions and how, despite the fact that we had spent so much time together, there remained an incommensurability among us: who or what is the subject of the dialogue? I wondered about my role again as the researcher trying to make the students (as objects of my gaze) into researchers too. I am also mindful of the their sense that to them, I too am an object of their subjectivity. As one student commented, "this seems like a lot of work ... writing a thesis - don't you have a life?"

Such a question deserves an answer. As I worked through the project I began to sense more and more the difficulty of writing about the affective investments of students as if there was a pattern of coherency to them. As Fiske(1992) and Grossberg(1992) cautioned me throughout,

doing research on the culture of everyday life calls upon me to constantly reposition myself and to question the tendency to write as if there is a singular "they." The places from which I write are multiple sites -partly constructed by my academic habitus, a recognition of my past failures (in dealing with gender issues), and the opportunity to do research in a school I feel comfortable in. These vantage points are constructed, I realize now, by my own struggle to create something meaningful, to pull together something that I am at ease with as a temporary form of self-creation. Rorty refers to this process as a "pragmatics of self-creation" that is achieved through writing as a struggle for a "final vocabulary" (Rorty, 1989, pp. 35-45). Yet Rorty's "final vocabulary" is never really our own, it is language that creates the impression for our selves as having arrived at some point of explanation or description. This is the argument Szabados draws from Wittgentsein - that writing any form of self-description involves interpreting a place for oneself, *a final resting place* (after Wittgenstein) (Szabados, 1992, p. 9). In action research, it is this final resting place that acts as a base from which to go forward, to begin anew. As such, there is no final resting place except that which remains fixed momentarily in text.

I read back on a "feminist postmodern" research that tells me where I might have been so that I may go forward. At the risk of seeming kitschy, perhaps this is the moment of noticing oneself constructing ones self; of recognizing and acknowledging ones limitations, of ethically and morally "what deep shit I am in." I stand here now prepared to admit (temporarily anyway) to a few things that might be called 'conclusions'. As Rorty describes our subjectivity, we all try to convince the Other that we are not simply " a copy or replica" (1989, p. 43). This drive is "a special form of an unconscious need everyone has; the need to come to terms with the blind impress which chance has given him, to make a self for himself by redistributing that impress in terms which are, if only marginally, his own" (Rorty, 1989, p. 43). For me, these conclusions are temporary impresses that have seemed to circulate throughout the action research. It is in Rorty's sense of the "contingency" of the "blind impress" that I proceed to outline what has emerged.

The "blind impress" conveys a sense of *my being written on* by the experiences of action research. I offer a way of interpreting these writings as *practical entanglements* that will come to represent my "final vocabularies". I import practical entanglements into Caputo's broader sense of encountering the difficulties of life with both a vigorous engagement and acceptance of "undecidability" (1987, p. 270). In Caputo I find a powerful ethic of discovering the play in the presence, of the recognition that something is unsettled about what is given. This is an ethic that I drew from Arendt's sense of natality - of going forward with uncertainty. Perhaps *practical entanglement* construes a sense of a myriad of possibilities: of aggressively *living the limit* by producing and circulating interruptions and parodies of what is given, or living quietly within the erasures and silences I find myself so often in. This latter option, living the limit, unable to go forward, leaves me , as one of many of the breech born of the postmodern condition;

recognizing the world as "the thunderstorm" of contestation yet unwilling to enter the flux (Caputo. p. 271).

In this sense, I deploy Arendt's metaphorics of *natality* against the *breech birth* as a way of responding to Caputo's call for an ethics of dissemination. I read Caputo calling us "to keep the *forms* of life from eliminating the *life*-form they are supposed to house" (p. 263). My work to deploy a feminist postmodern reading of the Social Studies 30 curriculum as a postmodern form was disseminated as a hybrid, a vigorous play that sought to "disrupt hardened shells" *(Ibid.)*. Yet, as Caputo reminds me, "the ethics of dissemination operates only in a community" where a conversation and engagement with others is possible. Yet cultural studies reminds me that such an engagement with the full presence of the Other remains elusive and beyond reach. As I look back on the last three months, living within the limitations of my own practices and situation in exploring feminist postmodern possibilities for social studies, I am reminded of student parodies and boredom, resistance and playfulness. In certain moments their vigorous withdrawal reminded me that teaching will always remain caught up in incommensurability.

I cannot say that I have now arrived at anything that could be construed as a "feminist postmodern curriculum". Recall that I hoped only to trace the difficulties and promises of attempting to write and live in such a plan within the context of one school setting. There were too many questions and I had too few selves to answer them. I think back to my promise to students to open up opportunities for them to *talk hard!*, but when I was confronted by some of their stories I felt helpless/unwilling to deal with them. This is where my complicitousness was evident. The project of exploring the "affective investments" of students that I imported from Grossberg (1992) positioned me as hovering above the students. Yet for me, this became an untenable place to be. To open a conversation about *power* and *security* in the home, school, or workplace involves much more risk than talking about these things in relation to other countries in other times. This has always been the distancing factor (Fiske, 1992) that allows social studies teachers like myself to hide from many of the issues the curriculum should explore in the life-worlds of students. (These ethical and epistemological issues include the responsibility of the individual to act locally in the face of oppression of others/themselves, the role of the media in shaping our (mis)understanding of ourselves/others, what is politics? who is politics really for?) I cannot claim to have always acted appropriately, but have sought to admit to vulnerabilities while involved in the difficulties of action research. What I come away from the work with is a sense of the arrested possibilities, the hiatus, the breech birth, a natality that calls for further engagement in the world. Again, calling on Caputo's ethics of dissemination, I see the curriculum possibilities we have explored as a breech birth - a form of life that awaits us but which cannot have a life of its own. *A postmodern curriculum is not to be built, it is by definition an exploration of something unsettled about what is given.* Thus reading the Social Studies 30 curriculum against

feminism and postmodernism involves, for teachers, dispersal and trembling, transgression and entanglement. This is not the modernist curriculum high ground where the teacher walks comfortably upon the solid footing of facts, concepts, and generalizations. This is the postmodern muskeg where the abject lives, where one's boots soon get sucked into the mire and slip off - where the ooze of the muck of praxis is felt between wriggling toes.

The following practical entanglements represent generalizable features that have emerged from the work we have undertaken. Put simply, this work has been directed towards *saturating politics*, in unsettling what is given to us as definitions of what is superfluous or superficial in the study of politics.

Four Practical Entanglements

1. The Risk of Domesticating the Other and the World

This entanglement involves the way I have positioned Others in the writing of the project. First I will explore this in relation to an outside agency, the school board, and then in the classroom, with the students.

I feel that action research continually produces, a "deconstructive twisting" between "normalization and transgression" as described by Caputo (1987, p. 215). In my search for a language that describes the Arendtian notion of natality as a political agency, I deployed Chang's sense of the self acknowledging the limits, and going forward within the limits. This was described by Chang (who draws on Foucault) as the *transgression*. As the action research proceeded I found myself caught up in my own story of the transgression - of recognizing limits and dwelling within those limits. This was the experience described in Chapter Six in the defense of our work with *Pump up the Volume!* before the Greystone School Board.

Yet I sense in my reading of going to the Board, what Connolly frames as "an ontological narcissism" that seeks to build an explanation of the world that is built "for us in one way or the other" (Connolly, 1989 p. p. 181). From Connolly, I sense the need to interrupt my telling of this story as an attempt to invoke "contingency" and uncertainty as "the dangerous event, the obdurate condition that resists intervention" (pp. 181-182). I read from Connolly, a sense that perhaps I have tried to "domesticate contingency" as a feature of the postmodern condition that renders the world highly resistant to meaningful human agency. In achieving a clever domestication of contingency I am in danger of allowing myself (and others) to interpret contingency as a site that can be described and interpreted. It is in describing these sites as resistant to agentic responses that I have often lapsed into a narrative of despair and hopeless helplessness. This is the narrative that sometimes gives rise to my reading of the students as *cynizens*. Yet in doing this have I not *written in* (Othered) the students as *cynizens* ? There is a semiotic coding of a deficiency model of pedagogy here. One that slides into a constructed

representation that writes in a cultural logics of the students as *despairing*, and the teachers (their saviour) as the ones who might save them through some emancipatory crypto-feminist/ postmodernist curriculum innovation.

A similar ironic twist lays in what Richard Shweder has called "the easy access to the other" that is indicative of the postmodern research experience. "Perhaps there was a time in the mythic past when the anthropological "other" was pristine, unitary, alien, and lived very far away. If so, things have changed. In the postmodern world that commerce has helped to create, the anthropological "other" is sophisticated, multiplex, near at hand, and deeply embedded in the bureaucratic institutions of the world system" (1993, p. 22). Shweder captures the difficulty of doing anthropological research that pretends any claim to be investigating prefigured unitary and coherent cultural settings. He cites the example of a visitor to a Japanese department store examining the emerging interest of many Japanese in Christmas. A prominent display in a department store had Santa Claus nailed to a cross. An American anthropologist planning to do research on the Maori of New Zealand found himself being scrutinized in an interview by a "native" Maori with an Oxford Ph. D. in anthropology who was dubious of "the 'Chicago school' of symbolism as a way to represent the beliefs and practices of 'others' " (p. 23).

The normalization of the Other is a tension that always draws us into the crisis of representation. After all, it is true as Sollers suggests - "Whoever that does not write is written" (cited in Lather , 1992 (a) , p. 160). A recent book aimed at the female teen market represents for me a parodic interuption of the research I have undertaken. After three months of intense work culminating in a reading of *Pump Up the Volume!* and the experience of *talking hard!* I stumbled upon a book that parodies this representation of *hard talk!* Part of a series called *Girl Talk*, this book titled *Earth Alert!* asks readers this question on the front cover: "Can Allison and her friends save the earth?" The book figures the girls as typical of "kids all over the world who can make a difference." At least to Allison Cloud a "Native American Indian" who is "super smart and really beautiful." The story ends with the girls protesting the school's use of Styrofoam trays in the cafeteria. The school principal concedes the girls' point eventually after they organize a protest march. The principal comes on side at the end with the comment, "I'm very pleased to see that Bradley's doing its job by turning out determined students who care". (p. 119). He goes on however, "But you still have detention." The girls follow the principal into his office. The students cheer them on, "We all made a difference." So the girls make a difference for *Man*, for *Nature*, but not themselves. *Earth Alert!* represents the production and circulation of the sanitized Other in the simulacra of the juvenile literature genre. I read in the girl's experience, everything getting saved but themselves.

I recall the reoccurring examples from my work in the school of girls resisting speaking out about situations they felt displeased with. Their displeasure with school policies was evident in

their comments in Chapter Three. So I wonder if in the simulacra of *Earth Alert!*, the code that *you can save the earth but not your ass!* is perhaps not inappropriate. It remains a profound irony for me that students tended to mistrust institutions that they were closest to - the school was rated lowest on their levels of confidence.

What strikes me as I look back on this experience, is the difficulty of describing this impulse as a form of 'rationality" that was informed by any sense of reasonableness or a systematic facticity. My feminist/postmodernist reading of the Social Studies 30 curriculum was, and will remain, a ruptured and discontinuous narrative. As Caputo employs Kuhn's sense of paradigmatic justificatory practices of gathering facts to support dominant knowledge (p. 215-217), I see an opportunity to pick up on Caputo's claim that in moments of crisis a radical hermeneutics, or "transgressive" practice is called for (p. 216). As modernist (read Enlightenment) readings of politics begin to implode, I see opportunities for displacements and interruptions of these "normal" readings of *politics*, the *citizen*, and what constitutes appropriate political explorations in high school curricula. Rather than the Leviathan as a Hobbesian metaphor for the sovereign, I see a figuration of the Leviathan as the multiphrenic subject who lives as a multiplex, unable to claim a single subject position. (For a current example of an attempt to dethrone the Leviathan as a single subject see Frank Davey's cross-reading of Kim Campbell: *Reading "Kim" Right* (1993). I see a reading of the Leviathan that I must deploy against my own subject hyphens as a greying-teacher-researcher-writer. I remain as a decentered, ruptured and contradictory subjectivity that dwells within what Caputo called the "incommensurability" of anomalies and competing paradigms (p. 217).

2. "Scribbling" A Feminist/Postmodern Reading of Social Studies 30

There is, embedded in the narrative line of this work, a sense of natality; highly fractal movement from *what is* to *what might be*. Throughout the action research I have positioned myself as responding to the modernist curriculum of unified political subjects who adhere/cohere to an Enlightenment state discourse. In the modernist discourse there are guidelines, there are rules that constitute the "facts" of life in the liberal *polis*. Yet, from Caputo's reading of Kuhn, these "facts" stand as "arti facts", deployed and circulated to re-produce the discourse that spawns them. As Caputo reminds us, "facts are always arti-facts to the theory in which they belong" (p. 218). As indicated in Chapter One and Two, these "facts" have been variously constructed around conceptualizations of *citizen as a unified subject*, the *ideology as a rational philosophical system* of thought (versus the unsophisticated fears of the primitive Other), and *the state as a rationally constructed mechanism* that reflects the will of the people.

What I propose is a reading of the work I have encountered as it has encountered me. This encounter, framed in a narrative going from a modernist to postmodernist reading of politics can

be outlined in the two summary charts below. I present these charts, acknowledging from the outset, the difficulty of breaking established habits, of trying to give structure or guidance in the work that has been undertaken. I present the charts not as modernist vs. postmodernist readings, but as an attempt as Caputo would have it, to "put in play" the project at hand, to transform old signs in a way that puts in motion " a repetition which alters" (p. 219).

I call upon the contrasting charts not as a rubric that generalizes a postmodern reading of the Social Studies 30 curriculum. Drawing on McHale (1992), from Chapter Two, we are beckoned, each of us, to "construct our own postmodernism" in our various local sites of engagement. These contrasting charts read against each other, as work that emerges from the slippages of action research over the last three months.

An introductory word about the structure of the " Table of Invention", is necessary. Adapting Schwab's four educational commonplaces (teachers, students, subject matter, and milieux), Kemmis and McTaggart (1990, pp. 91-95), offer the Table of Invention as a way of intersecting thematic concerns in education (along the vertical) from various subject positions (along the horizontal). In mapping out a curriculum concern for example, an action research group might ask themselves as teachers how they view students in the school, or how they see the society or mileux impacting on school life. By moving through the Table of Invention, the action research group engages in a conversation about their "preoccupations and puzzlements" (p. 94), allowing a focus to emerge as the group engages questions teased out from completing the chart.

I offer the Table of Invention as a way of constructing a narrative about the action research undertaken in this project. Rather than struggle with trying to complete the Table of Invention at the outset of the action research, I found the two charts wrote themselves as I proceeded through the project. The items in the charts are laden with the meanings that emerged through the location of our research. In this way they are more than a textual intersection of a feminist postmodern reading of Social Studies 30. These charts act to represent vectors of our engagement and discovery as the project proceeded. They are, in this sense, "scribblings" within the possibility of a changing curriculum. The charts represent the entanglements of trying to live in the difficulty of a curriculum that calls for a saturated politics.

The first chart represents a modernist social studies curriculum. I offer this chart as a reading of where many teachers like myself find the current Program of Studies. With increasing pressure for accountability, troped out as "outcomes based education", much of what is happening in curriculum work these days in Alberta is powered by the Student Evaluation Branch work on Diploma Examinations. As the Cold War fades into memory, with the implosion of Enlightenment grand narratives of liberalism/communism/ nationalism (to name a few), social studies teachers are still hard at work on a curriculum framed in the structures of "competing ideologies" and "competing nations". The questions postmodernism raises for social studies

teachers are simple ones: for whom does all of this 'competition' matter"? Is this a curriculum for *people* or *nations*? The current curriculum answers its questions before the students (and teachers?) get to ask their own.

The chart, "A Feminist/Postmodern Social Studies" is at best a series of markers that tease at *what might be, what might emerge* in the classroom. As Roseneau suggests, postmodern political orientations require us to explore in popular culture everything from reincarnation to hamburger franchises on university campuses (1992, pp. 138-166). The culture of everyday life remains ignored by the modernist social studies program because the affective investments to be made by students are to be in those constructions and representations circulated by the state centered discourse. What we have endeavored to do in our action research is to locate sites where students might explore power and security as if it mattered to them as socially interested subjects in the locations where they lived. This distancing that is powered by the current modernist program of studies is one that occludes many possibilities for inquiring into our role as subjects in the postmodern polis. These possibilities included those explored in this project (e.g. going forward within the transgression - *talking hard!*). Yet other examples could be easily raised in other schools and communities. For example, the whole area of spirituality and 'metaphysics' is erased from the Social Studies 30 curriculum as if 'religion' is not a powerful element in the lives of people and their affective investments. A postmodern curriculum would invite questions of social interest and agency anchored on questions of spirituality (e.g. Catholic liberation theology, native spirituality, Islam and its variants). The modernist political discourse embedded in the Social Studies 30 program acts to frame the Other as irrational, bizarre, and unworthy of consideration. Roseneau points to a variety of trends that reveal the collapse of the modernist political 'story': movements of marginalized groups into the mainstream, the growing political power of indigenous groups, New Agers, the 'third world' questioning of western truth claims.

Recent efforts to do curriculum work in a postmodern frame are bearing fruit. Stringer describes recent programs in West Australia that acknowledge communities as interpreters and cultural producers (1993). Stringer intersects postmodern theory and constructivistic curriculum processes as "the next generation" in education. I do not attempt such an ambitious project here; rather I offer a locally constructed postmodernism that is informed by one group of people who acted as their own curriculum "producers".

THE MODERNIST SOCIAL STUDIES 30 PROGRAM

	teachers	students	subject matter	milieux
teachers	- strategic deployers of objective knowledges and exemplars of critical thinking skills (as certified by the academy through degrees and by their students' performance on external exams)	- holders of essential commodities (discursive constructions) that can be transferred through classroom engagement	- teachers as agents who interpellate discursive constructions that *must* be acquired as Truth by students (as evaluated through external examinations)	- knowledges, skills and attitudes of the grand narratives require rigorous work by teachers to successfully impart these to students
students	- unitary subjects who can objectively select (from conflicting ideological principles) appropriate public policies	- those who *lack*, the ones who need to attain the outcomes that define success/failure	- unitary subjects who are citizens *in waiting* - lacking in the knowledges and skills of citizenship - students as social subjects who carry superficial or 'adolescent' concerns	- globalization and the intensification of knowledge and skill requires increasingly greater effort by students since they are distanced from what is 'real'
subject matter	- conflicting Enlightenment grand narratives that offer options for students to "critically select" from	- curriculum as a commodity, resource to be consumed and interpellated upon our subjectivity(e.g. politics is 'out there')	- the Enlightenment grand narratives (Marxism, liberalism, nationalism) - the separation of public/private spheres - language of outcomes based education (delimiting what is superfluous)	- social studies is for the *state, society*, for *Man* (to reproduce coherent and rationalistic public action)
milieux	- globalization and the rate of change accelerates/ intensifies the need for students to learn what is produced and circulated in a rarefied modernism	- increasing requirements and expectations ("our *lack* is intensely evident")	- the perfectability of *Man* with unlimited economic opportunities - the culture of everyday life superfluous to political inquiry	- progress powering itself through the production and circulation of invested bodies (e.g. outcomes based learning)

A FEMINIST/POSTMODERN SOCIAL STUDIES 30

	teachers	students	subject matter	milieux
teachers	- multiphrenic selves who engage in a pedagogy that reveals their own ambiguities and contradictions about power/security	- multiplicity and ambiguity in their representations of appropriate political discourse	- teachers as poetic transgressors - teachers as representations of what *might be*, are texts that can offer pedagogical interruptions and displacements for students	- teachers as complicit and entangled in the ambiguities of their own power relations - skepticism of their descriptive and prescriptive texts and practices
students	- multiple subjectivities whose shifting identities/agencies need to be nurtured through a patient vigor - having the choice to interrupt and displace state centered discourse (e.g. the division between public/private)	- 'trembling hermeneuts' - locates student affective investments in the sites of everday life - students as their own "knowledge agents", taking on *response ability* (writing their own fears)	- sources of that which is written/spoken - students as socially interested subjects with affective investments	- possibility of students as nomadic affective individuals - social interested subjects mobilized to act agentically only in specific contexts (politics of position not 'principle')
subject matter	- decentered from the modernist narratives but embracing their possibility (e.g. textual poaching)	- displacement of normalizing definitions of what is political (exploring sites of affective investment)	- floating signs that resist strict interpolation by students, teachers - investigations of the culture of everyday life	- drawing on media 'literacy', cultural studies - a language of possibilities that crosses the limits with a mindfulness to create challenge without despair
milieux	- living within the difficulty of the death of the *Word* and of *Man*	- teachers problematizing their role as mediators of "what to fear" rather than "what to believe" - brilliant simulacra that renders broad possibilities for investment and agency	- politics as a polymorphic possibility in multiple sites (tenaciously pragmatic coalitions)	- breakdown of the binary of autonomy/heteronomy, nature/culture, original/copy - society for people not for *Man;* a reconstituted polis that nurtures difference (for the nomad)

The feminist/postmodern curriculum mapped out above outlines some of the work that was attempted over the last three months. I do not present the charts as a response to the various postmodernist interpretive camps. What I do offer in the charts, is a way of pointing to some of the possibilities explored in our limited time with the students. Central to the possibilities that emerge from this chart is the role of the teacher who is an enmired subject, entangled by the pedagogic necessity to admit his/her own complicity. Whether or not the curriculum is one of inclusion and conversation or erasure and appropriation is the teacher's responsibility. Throughout this project I have been reminded of the challenge.

3. Constructing a Hard Realism: Going Forward as Subjects in the World

The third entanglement involves the recovery of the affective investments (after Grossberg, 1992) made by students as socially interested subjects. In particular, what I wish to explore, is the response of "being hard" in the world as such a subject. I see in the culture of everyday life and in our work with the students, the project of living in the limit, of being invited to produce and circulate our meanings and affective investments (after Grossberg, 1992). Our uncertainties and contingencies were exposed intermittently as we proceeded through our three weeks together.

In reviewing our work, I sense an exhaustion with being given so much to do and so little time to do it in. There is a hyperactivity that overcomes the subject confronted with the endless possibilities and responsibilities. The project of *acknowledging the limit and going forward within it* is not one that comes without a price. There is an enormous undecidability in all of this postmodern construction of freedom. Connolly captures the multiphrenic emotion of contemporary life in this passage.

> The identity available to the late-modern self remains bound up with historically received standards of self-responsibility, self-discipline, and freedom. The individual is not merely responsible for particular actions, but, to varying and shifting degrees, for the character she develops, the stability of his mental life, the way their children turn out, the income level "earned," the social recognition attained, and so on. Background notions and institutions of love (where each chooses the other free of traditional constraints), self-responsibility (where one is held accountable for what one does and becomes), equal opportunity (where an individual's career and income flow from one's own ability, effort, and luck), an individual's freedom (where each plays a part in shaping rules and laws governing all) - each of these practices is enabled and confined by relations it bears to the others (1989, p. 171).

For Connolly, the self is crystallized by the recognition that life is short. Nudged, as we are by the prospect of death toward choosing from an array of possibilities in our lives, we hover, try to defer, and often avoid making a decision. But in the end we must go forward into the flux. This is why Arendt's *natality*, for me, evokes a strong phenomenological reading of the uncertainty of the 'new beginning', the opening move that knows no limit of its own. Over time, our experiences, sedimented as they are upon our subjectivity, render talk of "freedom" rather

hollow. Through the disruptions and discontinuities that become our life narratives, each choice, each affective investment we make, finds us caught in a bind/blind. This is the paradox of talking about freedom, of the radical contingency that reminds us, as Milan Kundera does, that our life "occurs only once, and the reason we cannot determine which of our decisions are good and which is bad, is that in a given situation we can make only one decision; we are not granted a second, third, or fourth life in which to compare individual decisions" (1984, p. 222).

In the moments of the acknowledgment of the limit and the choice about the commitment to the transgression, we can only go around once. This is an essential part of the political phenomenology of fear in the postmodern *agora*. While we can contest the meanings and utility of our actions, there is always the choice that remains, the decision to go forward into the world or not. This is where the question of agent-hood is so important. Agency (influence over the forces that influence one's life such as the economy, technology, the faith in competition, nationalism) remains a slippery possibility (Grossberg, 1992, p. 123). The forces of industrialism and technology, democratization and bureaucratization, remain outside the direct control and manipulation of any one agent or group of agents (individuals or groups that channel and circulate agencies, acting on their behalf). Quite often agents launch forces to work that undermine their agendas; for example some feminists supporting anti-pornography legislation end up helping the efforts of the Right to legislate morality. The key, for Grossberg, is not to focus too seriously on identity politics (with its impossible array of contingencies it invites for the subject), or questions of deciding to act as an agent or not. Taking on multinational corporations or national politicians over environmental issues may seem a worthwhile investment of student time and commitment. Yet Grossberg allegorically offers a new subject position, one that is a "multiple, taking on the color and shape from which it moves" (P. 127). The affective individual takes up discourse where it needs it; articulating its affective investments depending on strategic considerations and investments from everyday life. Grossberg speaks about Amnesty International, Band Aid, and Green Peace as examples where committed individuals decided to set aside questions of morality, identity politics, and abstract philosophical questions to simply agree on finding a commonality from which to act. There is no transcendence or complex principles that power these efforts. Their motto he suggests, might be: "Think globally, act appropriately" (p. 392). As I have offered earlier, we do not have to look for politics - it will find us.

Affective individuality struggles to find ways to get people to care again. In this sense, students, I feel, must be given opportunities for acting as caring socially interested subjects in the (affectively invested) sites that exist in their lives (e.g. journals, videos, parodic performance). From these sites students move from tactics to strategies, from acting to agency where appropriate.

As a masculine coded response to the possibility of speaking out, I saw "talking hard" effectively parodied and appropriated by the students. As the review of student work from Chapter 7 suggests, both male and female students vigorously engaged "talking hard" as a vehicle for their own stories about "speaking out" and "standing hard". I see our work with "talking hard" and "standing hard" as a counter- metaphorics (after Caputo 1989, p. 279) that liberates the masculine code of Hard Harry and lets it out to play. I remain convinced by the vigour of the student responses, by their willingness to decenter the coded response of Hard Harry and appropriate it for their own uses. There remains in their work, the affirmation of what Caputo sees as the project of keeping "the system in play". This is the slippage of signs that renders the postmodern condition such an invigorating place of radical possibility. I am drawn here to the cover of *Vanity Fair* (August, 1993) featuring a scantily clad Cindy Crawford shaving k.d. lang who is dressed in a three piece suit. For me, the photo layout invites multiple readings, slips and slides the binary of heterosexual and homosexual desire, it beguiles and it teases. The cover and photo spread acts to disseminate and "disrupt hardened shells" (Caputo, 1987, p. 263). For me, k.d. lang as an affective individual "stands hard" and "disrupts hardened shells" (by sliding the signifiers) when she shows up at an animal rights benefit titled "Fur Is a Drag" wearing a frilly dress and bouffant hair (*Vanity Fair*, 1993, pp. 96-98, 142-146). In the flipped codes I read a project of acknowledging one's limits (and by corollary one's possibilities) and going forward into the transgression.

Although "talking hard" is a heavily coded male instrument, given how so many females in the classes took this up, I have little hesitation in seeing it as a way of signifying a tactical response to the experience of being silenced. Firstly, the connection with "Hard Harry" connotes a linkage to the penis, (hard erections). Yet, what of the vulva's potential for being written as *hard?* Women are usually written as possessing (soft) vaginas with their (hard?) vulvas invisible as sexual organs. I am not arguing for a naturalism here, rather for displacing the coding of male sexuality as hard, the female's as soft. Also, the stories and projects completed by the females indicate the power of their imaginations and ability to invade the sign in a carnivalesque manner. Lastly, I draw from the O.E.D. readings of "hard" that invite less male gendered connotations. Consider "hard" in its basic sense: "I. passively hard: resisting force, pressure, or effort of some kind. 1. A primary adjective expressing consistency of matter: That does not yield to blows or pressure; *not easily penetrated* or separated into particles" (my italics). "Talk hard" remained in our work, a tool that females took up with relative ease. There was also, a degree of indeterminacy in "talking hard" and "standing hard" - these came to mean different things to different students. For some girls it involved an agentic forceful speaking out or confrontational posturing directed at public officials in an effort to effect some agency. (I note that Grossberg suggests that the affective individual speaks like the rapper whose forceful boasting speech is "the almost purely

affective sign of the rapper's existence" (1992, p. 126).) Other female students saw "talking hard" as burrowing "into the journal" or "going underground" with subversive or disruptive tactics.

"Talking hard" and "standing hard" might be seen in the context of what Connolly sees as the implosion of late-modernity's contradictory and sliding standards for selves who tenaciously claim freedom (however confident that freedom might be). Connolly observes that we are confronted with "hard choices" when we are "penetrated too densely by disciplinary powers and standards" (1989, p. 172). The effect of this penetration is important pedagogically in terms of the action research I have undertaken with the students. Connolly suggests that there is a contradictory message in all of the "hard choices" given to us in late modernity; "the late-modern definition of life as a project first demands intensive self-organization and then produces dependent uncertainty" (p. 174). Framed in this way, Connolly sees a "generalized resentment" emerging from individuals who struggle for leverage in a world where everything is so close together and mediated through institutions.

This resentment is perhaps evident in a hyperactivity that I share with the students. This hyperactivity can be read as some writers have suggested, as the result of an increasing mediation and domestication of pain and death. This is Shapiro's point when he suggests that increasingly we have come to depend on "knowledge agents" who mediate the great distance between "experience and knowledge" (1989, p. 20). This is both the gift and trap of postmodernity - fear is generally known only indirectly through representations that are highly contested. (Of course, as Shapiro emphasizes, individuals living in the violence of civil war or abject poverty do not have the luxury of this experience - there is a direct link between the experience and knowledge of reality.) This hyperactivity takes the form of a curriculum that compresses a myriad of issues in a very limited time, while erasing student affective investments in the world.

I read "talking hard" and "standing hard" as a sliding category of responses to hyperactivity and generalized resentment. I offer "talking hard" and "standing hard" allegorically, as strategic parodic performances that students can put into play in the *presence* of their generalized and specific resentments. It is one way of "speaking up" that struggles against erasure and occlusion. Perhaps this notion of "talking and standing hard" is echoed by pollster Allan Gregg, who has explored public attitudes towards politics in the last few years. He describes the public mood as one of "hard realism" (CBC radio, May 5, 1993). To Gregg, this involves two things - a sense that politicians and leaders are not what they claim ('the ones who will solve the problems of society'), and secondly, these problems require difficult choices ("hard choices"). As problematic as polls are in their claims to reflect "public opinion", I remain struck by the ambivalence that is widespread toward national and provincial politics. Gregg describes in detail the pervasive sense of disaffection with large political institutions in Canada. "Hard realism" to Gregg suggests that

at national and provincial levels, Canadians remain rather cynical and distrustful. He does see real opportunities for change coming through local communities where problems seem more manageable and solutions less elusive.

The sense of local contingency emerges in "talking hard" and "standing hard". In this project I have struggled with a political phenomenology of emotion that attempts to ask "what do you fear" rather than "what do you believe". This drew me to the students in various locations. As in archaeology, their responses left me poking about in the rubble (stories, radio shows, photos) that they left behind. Sometimes their writing was constructed for the benefit of "the project," or their marks. Other times they offered parodies of themselves and/or criticism of the work we were involved in. Within these vigorous productions we struggled over the meanings of "security" and "power", each trying to write the Other. When a student manufactures a story about having an affair with a teacher because "her life is too boring to write about" (compared to the phantasm of Hard Harry's world), I am mindful of the semiotic similarities that I end up seeming to be trying to inscribe upon the students' experiences and those coded by in *Pump Up the Volume!*

These incongruities do not lessen my commitment to the work - it only cautions me of the tendency to erase differences, to *write in* the students in the project. Throughout the project I was reminded of the need to pay attention to *what is*, not what *will be*. The *will be* remains modernism's project. *What is* may be mapped to some degree by the affective investments of students. Beginning with the exploration of pregression, through to *Grand Canyon* and the poetics of the junkyard of dreams, and with the intersection with Hard Harry in *Pump Up the Volume!*, our action research has drawn our attention to the difficulties of encountering the incommensurability of living in what Connolly called "generalized resentment". I deploy on behalf of the students, "talking hard" and "standing hard" has ways of going forward in the world of a postmodern political agency.

4. Claiming "Not to Know" the Other: A Strategic Distancing?

Berman's critique of postmodernism as "a nihilism without tears" (1989) invites the last entanglement I wish to explore. Berman sees the postmodernists (Foucault, Derrida, Baudrillard among others) as armchair social critics, diminishing the possibility of individualism and humanism - negating the human person from the human condition. Yet Berman too easily ignores the politics of suspicion that postmodernism has allowed us to deploy against what is given to us in the world. Our subjectivity, laying in a discursive field of social and political forces, is vigorously intersected and ruptured in the world. Postmodernism invites the questions about the affective investments we make as enmired subjects (Butler, 1990). So I counter to Berman that postmodernism is indeed *a crying game*; what is produced and circulated through our investment, in the face of the effects of power, brings us to joy or sadness, ambivalence or

action. Inquiring into human experience through a questioning of our meanings and affective investments, brings tears (of shame/guilt, of anger and resentment, of living in the limit of ourselves/others). By locating appropriate sites where we can go forward into the world, we stand at the threshold, the natality, of becoming caught in the mire, in the flux that brings us to tears and laughter.

Working with students calls me to be wary of the temptation to conclude my work with them as nothing more than a descriptive reporting of a "bottom-up production of difference" (Fiske p. 164, 1992). Here I am mindful of my academic project to introduce a feminist/postmodern reading into the social studies curriculum. At times this powers me towards a reading of the students and myself located on the frontline of some cachet critical pedagogy. I avoid the temptation to read their writing as "liberatory" or "critical", yet there are many lapses. It remains in the pedagogical relationship, developed over time that offers ruptures of the reading of student work as a new feminist/postmodern curriculum reality. I am reminded of the female students who fabricated an entire radio broadcast from a teen magazine. While there is a Baudrillarian justice in what they did (is theirs any less a copy of a copy than the work of others?), I cannot ignore the fact that in our time together we did get to share the experience of confronting common difficulties. Reified issues of gender, marginalization, identity, and the 'future', were temporary nodal points that engaged us. Our subjectivities were revealed to be neither as coherent as my writing imagines them nor as incoherent as the postmodernists might believe. (Grossberg (1986), discusses Hall's sense of this the incoherency/coherency tension in subjectivity as we throw ourselves into the incompleteness of existence).

So I am left with the question, how have I come to know anything pedagogically important about the students? They live, as I do, caught in their respective situatedness and positionality, as sons/daughters, friends, part-time workers, students. They live in a proliferation of configurations that defies easy access. But I too live in this multiplicity, caught "in the hyphens" as Michelle Fine frames the action researcher (1992, p. 229). I lie somewhere in between being a teacher, outsider, middle class, middle aged male. Yet does this social space of "living in the hyphens" that I am constructing from Fine, have the effect of distancing me from the students? Sliding along these "hyphens", is perhaps a social position that acts as part of an "academic habitus" (Fiske p. 155, 1992) that distances myself from their interests and problems. This is for me, the danger of "not knowing" the Other - of throwing up one's hands and claiming defeat in the face of the multiplex of subjectivities. This is the crisis of representation where no one should claim to speak for or about the Other.

Yet what we have attempted in our work is a presentation of who we are, not as fixed identities or subjects, but as subjects trying to construct places from which to speak and act. The point is that it is possible to get to know the other, although in a refracted way through the

contexts and situations where the other is located. As Grossberg suggests, "individuals are always simultaneously located in a number of fluid, temporary and competing positions" that give rise to "fluid communities" (p. 377-379).

What I wish to offer is a possibility for "knowing" the socially situated interests of students, of sharing with them, contingent possibilities that might inform our understanding of how we read *politics*. I see the questions "who are we?" and "what do we fear?", as inviting teachers into a feminist/postmodern reading to the social studies curriculum. The engagement, ambivalences and contradictions throughout our action research I see as part of the "deep investments" (Britzman et al, 1991, p. 98) that we all have brought to the classroom in exploring issues of gender and power in society. Because of the commitments of students to what they know, Britzmann finds classroom work on racism and sexism both rich in difficulty and promise. While she finds students' racist and sexist attitudes difficult to deal with - the alternative of silencing and erasing these from classroom work is unacceptable. Pedagogically we have no choice but to go forward. Britzmann concludes her work with this observation: "The social categories we all bear, imaginary communities we all hope to join or dismiss, must be taken as central in understanding contradictory social practices that constitute the postmodern tensions of what it means to be recognized and to recognize others" *(Ibid.)*.

Student investments in the identities and social categories that are produced and circulated in daily life (at school, the home, at work), represent some of what awaits social studies as it enters a postmodern turn. The deployment of the curriculum into the culture of everyday life as a way of retextualizing political concepts in the Alberta social studies program invites inquiry into questions that have for too long been ignored. (For example, who decides what is a *public* issue, as opposed to a *private* issue such as sexual abuse)? Is *citizenship* possible or even desirable in the postmodern? Is participation in school and community action somehow lacking in legitimacy in the current state centered discourse? Who in the *agora*, is the curriculum for? Other issues emerge from the exclusion of native culture, and local knowledges; the experiences of marginalized groups such as the inner-city poor, have had little or no place in the Social Studies 30 program. (Not that many students from these groups ever make it through the program anyway.) What sense of identity and agency does the current program offer to students? Particularly, what of the gendered way politics is framed as "something out there"?

Such questions, perhaps, will invite us out of our "hardened shells". We must be careful not to build new ones. As teachers, we must resist the erasures and foreclosures involved in centralizing attempts to write clear and definitive answers that claim to map out a provincial or national feminist postmodern curriculum. Given the ambiguities and contradictions woven throughout engagements with students, each of us as teachers must find our own way in constructing such a curriculum.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

A 1 Letter of Introduction (Feb. 14, 1993)
A 2 Letter from Greystone School Division (Feb. 22, 1993)

A 1

To: Principal, Greystone High School Feb. 14, 1993
cc: Superintendent of Schools, Greystone School Division
From: Jean-Claude Couture

I am requesting the school's cooperation-operation in an action research project. The purpose of the project is to explore possible gender bias and exclusion in the provincial Social Studies Program of Studies. The eventual outcome of this research will be the development of an alternative conceptualization for the Grade 12 Social Studies 30 Program. This will form the basis for my thesis in the M.Ed. program at the University of Alberta.

The research I am proposing is collaborative in nature. The students in three social studies classes and their teacher, Mr. Rod Phillips, will be working in the development and design of alternative conceptions to the way the current curriculum defines political concepts such as *citizen, state*, and *security* (to name a few). Students will be asked to participate in learning activities that identify their understandings of key grade 12 social studies concepts before their entry into Social Studies 30. Recent work in feminist and postmodern re-readings of what constitutes appropriate *political understanding* for young people will be explored with the students and the teacher. The intention will be to determine sources of exclusion and difference in the way females and males see themselves as political agents in the modern state.

I will be a co-researcher with the students and cooperating teacher. To this end a series of classes will be scheduled that will focus on this work. Three cycles of visitations will be required. The first visitation cycle will occur in the last week of February, the second cycle will involve one day visitations in March and April, and the third will involve a one week session late in April. This represents a considerable amount of class time (approximately 15 classes). However, all activities will consider the objectives of the social studies courses involved. Since grade 10 and 11 students will be involved (one Social 10 class, two Social 20 classes), every effort will be made to evaluate student performance in accordance with the current Program of Studies for those grades. For example, the Social Studies 10 Program requires an exploration of citizen rights in Canada. This research project's inquiry into *citizenship* (framed in terms of the Social 30 Program) will be easily accommodated to Social 10 course objectives, allowing the students to meet the objectives of their Grade 10 program while concurrently working in this research project. *At no time will the educational needs of the students as defined by the Program of Studies and the school administration be compromised.*

The research proposed will require the hard work and joint commitment of the students, their teacher, and myself. The numerous learning activities planned will include surveys, student essay and journal writing, video and audio productions, as well as critical viewing of current film sources relevant to the themes of the research. The intent is to do research *with* the students, not *on* the students. To this end, I trust you will endorse the participation of these classes in this project . Thank you.

GREYSTONE SCHOOL DIVISION

February 22, 1993

Mr. J.C. Couture

Dear Jean-Claude:

I appreciated receiving an outline of your research project which I reviewed. Your research is without a doubt relevant to the field of education because gender bias is still prevalent within the education system.

I look forward to talking with you about your research and the eventual development of an alternative conceptualization for the Grade 12 Social Studies 30 Program.

Please be assured of my complete endorsement of your research project. If there is any way I can assist you, please let me know. In the meantime, I wish you the best of luck in carrying out your research.

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Schools

Appendix B

B 1 Assignment: How do boys see girls? How do girls see boys?
B 2 Student "Friends and Companions" Ads
B 3 Read backs: Monday, Feb. 24 - Friday, Feb. 27
B 4 Student Questionnaire (Parts A-G)
B 5 Student Questionnaire - Summary of Results (Parts B-G)
B 6 Quantum Leap Assignment and Evaluation Guide
B 7 Student Story: "The Leap!"
B 8 Student Story: "The End to a Slaughter"
B 9 Student Story: "Nuclear Leap"
B 10 Student Story: "Brigitte's Leap"

B 1

Assignment: How do boys see girls? How do girls see boys?

It is twenty years from now and you are getting older... almost as old as Mr. Phillips (scary thought!). Despite your best efforts and your charming personality you find yourself without a significant other. (Most people don't know a good thing when they see it - right?) After much thought you decide to write an ad for the *Friends and Companions* column. In the ad you try to accomplish what many of the examples you were given try to do; providing an indication of *who are* and *what you want.*
Since you are still in high school you will have to project yourself forward in time and imagine (within reason) what you expect your life to be like when you are ... *middle aged.*

Consider our discussions in class and what you reasonably expect of yourself in the future. Have fun.
Based on these ads, we will discuss these questions in the next class:

Are there differences between how male and female students see their respective futures? What are the factors (if any) that might contribute to these differences?.
If there are no significant differences, what are the actual chances that the futures of males/females will be as they thought they would be?

Limit your ad to 125 words or so.

Student "Friends and Companions" Ads

Female Student Ads

A successful bussiness woman seeks a companion who is about five feet, six inches to six feet tall and between the ages of thirty four and fourty. I'm adventuress, caring, intelligent warm, talented, and enjoy the outdoors. I have blond hair, bluish-green eyes, I'm 35 years old, and am five feet three inches tall. I also have asthma. I like romantic dinners by candle light, long walks along the beach, sports, late nights on the town, and spending time alone or with friends. Some of my interests are camping, hiking, biking, travelling (some day I would like to see the whole world), and the list could go on forever. The man that I'm looking for should have some of the same interests that I have and many more. He should also have a sense of humor, be financially stable, well educated, a non-smoker (preferablly), physically fit, and caring. If you like what you just read please send a brief synopsis of your background and a picture (optional) to :

I am a successful physio therapist and I hope to meet another professional. He must be at least 34 and no older than 38. The type of man that I'd like to get to know must be fit and enjoy various outdoor sports such as mountain biking, skiing and taking long walks on the beach. He must be someone who loves life and keeps himself in good shape; non-smoker. Someone who is always ready to take a risk and willing to have an adventure. I am 36 years old and I have blonde hair and blue eyes. I am 5'7". I love trying new things so if there's something you've always wanted to do but have never done it, feel free to make suggestions. I'm independent but not distant from the real world and would like the same in a man. Contact me at --- ----.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN STARTING A RELATIONSHIP? Well how would you like to meet a tall, caring, not a big spender 36 year old single female. I enjoy the outdoors and exploring new places. I am willing to work full or part time job. I don't mind kids. I prefer a man who is dependent, caring, and Financially secure. Also someone who is physically fit and who isn't a coach potato. Please call 123-4567 or write. Write to Lonelyville Alberta, Box 1234, A1B C2D

I am a 5'11'', 125lbs, white female with brown hair and eyes. At age 37 I am reasonably attractive and sophisticated. Interested in travel, excitement, and romantic evenings, I am looking for a man who appreciates the same. In my spare time I relish being out in the outdoors or curling up in front of a roaring fire place. I am looking for a man who shares some of my same interests and can be loving and caring when needed but not to overly aggressive. Material things are not always important just the time and enjoyment of one anothers company. Please send a letter describing yourself and if so desired a photo.

Single, white female, who enjoys riding and athletics as well as outdoor activities, seeks 30-40 yr man . . . a cowboy. MUST have nice wranglers and drive a nice truck. Must also be a good rider, enjoy the back country, be good looking, athletic and have a stable career. Land and arena (indoor) would be appreciated. Pls. send photo.

Single white 34 year old compasionate, intellegent and fun loving male looking for a woman around the same age who enjoys physical activities, sports, beaches, a good sense of humor and most of all, having fun. I am a financially secure working dentist with lots of free time to do whatever please. If these qualities arouse you, make you cry, dance in the streets, make you laugh, whatever, please contact me through the Hinton Parklander. All letters answered.

Intellegent single white male looking for single or married white female to share a long lasting relationship with. He is 6'2" with attractive features. Finacially secure. Living in a well furnished bungalow. She must like physical activities such as hockey, football and sex. She must have a sense of humor and love to dance. Must be willinig to share quality time together. If you are interested in me call me at home: 865-2358 or at work: 865-5754.

Single white male 36, attractive, good humored, good personality and is caring with a good supportive profession. Likes the outdoors and is in good mental and physical shape. Would like a woman of good humor, attractive, likes outdoor activities and travelling, has a stable profession. A woman that has not been divorced is preferrable and doesn't have any children. Overall a good cook with a good personality that is always kind and outgoing. Please send a photograph. Box 3345, The Globe, 444 Front St. W., Tor. M5v 2S9.

Single caucasian male, attractive, caring, is in good mental and physical shape, and is college educated. Likes to do many sportive activities and has a successful job. Seeking an attractive woman from the age of 25-30. Has to be physically fit and likes to play sports. Also, looking for a woman who has a sense of humor, is natural, and is very open-minded. Would like to meet an all-around fun woman.

Single white male in need
of a beautiful companion with
a great sense of humor. Must
be 30-35 years old, non-smoker
and loves to travel. I am 6'1
and 37 years old. Athletics is
a big part of my life. I love
to dance and have a good time
in night clubs. I am financially
stable and looking for a long
term relationship. Would like
to see photo if possible. Please
send letter to P.O.B. 6656
Edmonton, Alberta, M5W 5K3

Monday, Feb. 24 Readback

(Observations comparing the Block A class with the Block C class.)

Introductory comments had the attention of most students, especially when stats regarding rape, women earning 65% of what men make, were mentioned. Boys seemed to be somewhat more vocal whereas girls tended to sit back and be non-committed. Students did loosen up as the period wore on yet were still reluctant to really open up. Whether this was due to shyness or not totally sure of the instructor or was it the threatening aspect of the topic? There was a marked difference between the initial response of this class and the Block A class. The Social 20's in the morning were very enthusiastic and responsive. It is odd though... this class is usually difficult to keep quiet. I think the difference between this class and the Social 20 class this morning is that the future seemed so far off for the Grade tens. The issues of post-secondary schooling, jobs, equality seemed too far away. It's a long time from now for the tens before they graduate. Also some of the tens seemed reluctant to take a stand on risky issues for fear of being put down by the opposite sex.

The film *(No Way! Not me)* seemed to keep the students' attention. The statistics seemed to grab their attention (women used to make $4.00 for a 70 hour work week). The short assignment probably made them more attentive as well. A number of the students honed in on the statement that there were 500,000 single parent families in Canada - some thought the elderly lady was going to eat the cat food! The film tended to lose the students near the end as Rosemary Brown's lecture continued. The stats at the end of the film drew the students back.

The comments by the students after the film indicated that many students were not convinced that discrimination was the issue. Some felt that women 'chose' lifestyles that got them into trouble (e.g. quitting school, getting pregnant too early). Students questioned whether or not many women sit back and wait for someone to come along to care for them.

When the assignment *Friends and Companions* was introduced, there was some laughter and giggling. There was some excitement about what they might say or do in the ad - some students were already questioning each other about what they were going to put down. Some curiosity as to "what will I be like in 20 years?"

There should be some interesting results tomorrow.

Tuesday Feb. 23 Read back

There were some different ideas between classes and sexes, however, there were more commonalties than differences. I opened the discussion with each class (Block A SS 20 boys - Block C SS 10 girls - Block D SS 20 boys) asking their input on the film, " *Not Me! No Way*". The boys of the first class were, by and large, rather offended. They seemed to take the film rather personally as if Rosemary Brown was accusing them of creating the poverty and associated problems which women face. They felt that often it was the choice of the girls and thus their plight was much of their own creation. The girls of SS 10 took it to heart as that's what reality is really like. When asked if any of them might fall into the trap and be a "Yes Me", they said no, but I think in some cases it was more of a hopeful no than a "for sure it won't happen to me" no. The boys of Block D took the information at face value as that was reality and much of the doing was as a result of poor choices by the girls.

Next question was to what the students were looking for in relation to their personal ad. In most cases the answers were pretty much the same. The given responses below are the top choices for each category:

What girls wanted:

*financial security
*personal characteristics
- caring
- warm
- trustworthy
- honest
*fit and active
*older men
- experienced
- sown all their wild oats
- ready to settle down

What they expected of selves:

*career oriented
*independent

*lasting relationship

What boys wanted:

*attractive
*intelligent with own career
*intelligent
*no previous commitments and younger

*personality traits
- caring
- trustworthy
- passionate
- honest

What they expected of selves:

*financially well off
*good looking and desirable
*long term relationship
*nothing to tie them down
- kids
- previous commitment

There were some interesting thoughts and comments. In the Block D class it was a split between having an intelligent girl or a "bimbo". But after much discussion they felt it more important to have someone with which to have an intelligent conversation. They also discussed the possibilities that it might be better to look at personality beauty as opposed to physical beauty. Nice to count on someone all the time than to have a beautiful "bitch". All groups indicated that they would prefer a potential mate who had not been previously married or deeply involved. Concern that they may have had a bad experience (abusive spouse, kids, etc.) which might have left them "screwed up".

The boys were interested to note that the girls in other classes had said that an attractive man was not as important as one who would be financially secure and willing to take care of them. All in all, it was an interesting experience to see what they were looking for. The boys admitted that it would be time to settle down as "playtime" was over. Guess middle age is old to them. The girls wanted to settle down as well. Perhaps shopping would give way to child rearing as boys generally wanted to start a family at that point.

When asked what the other sex would ask for, both sides were pretty accurate. They seem to know each other well, but the boys still felt that the girls would look for an attractive man. That was a big must in their way of thinking. All agreed the other must have a good sense of humor, be open minded, like to travel and just want to have a lot of fun. Besides, they were all so financially secure they really wouldn't have to spend much time at work. They did look at the positives, though. I truly wish them well.

Friday Feb. 27 Read Back

The culmination of the week's work ended with some insightful thoughts and feelings by the students. J.C. took over the opening of the class discussion for the SS 20 Block A class and the SS 10 Block C class while I took the SS 20 Block D's. All three classes started off by being asked their responses to the assignment of *"Quantum Leap"*. To a degree they all felt that it was difficult. The basis of this was the creativity they were forced to use as opposed to the usual structure of most assignments. Yet, difficulty aside, many of them thought it to be an interesting assignment. On the reading of the works, many really did put a lot of thought into their work and did a fine job. Suggestion for future that they might have to "leap" into their own body at another age to really deal with a topic that is important to them.

Many issues were dealt with from homosexuality, to family violence, to the rebirth of famous personalities into a different setting. Many dealt with issues that were relevant to them but some looked more to the dramatic, eg. sinking of the Lusitania. Through discussion of reality to fantasy came the issues of homosexuality and modeling and what their thoughts ranged from. One student mentioned the fact that, "I'd be freaked out to have two men making out, it's gross", while another student in the same class noted that, "what people do in their own bed is their own business and nobody else's". An interesting topic was the split on the reality of models. Are they real or has the media made them up? J.C. challenged a class that for $500.00 he could have any student made up to look as glamorous as the cover girls of the magazine, Seventeen.

This topic led to the movie, *"For Richer, For Poorer"*. Consensus agreement followed, sometimes after much discussion, that the gap between men and women financially is far greater with the women. One comment that was fairly consistent with the views of many was the statement that if "Joan" didn't smoke she could save lots of money. I think the insularization of our kids here does save them from some of the harsher realities of the world. Whether it be ten dollars or sixteen dollars, that's not enough for a single parent to keep herself and two children going. As a whole, the students viewed this video as reality and the depressing life some people (especially women) are forced to go through. The quote of statistics I gave for the remarriage of middle aged people, as well as the basic idea that these students wanted to marry previously non-committed people, tended to raise notice that there really is a bleak future for many people and especially single parent mothers.

Discussion tended to center around money and the belief that if one has it then they will probably have fewer problems. Question J.C. raised was whether or not money solves all problems. A typical response was , "it doesn't solve all problems but you can sure be happy for a year or two". Further to that comment, J.C. raised the statistic that only 15% of married people are happy. I also noted that 70% of the people who win lotteries in excess of $1 million are broke within 3 years. Thus, they started to question how they might better invest their money to ensure it stays around for awhile longer. Perhaps the fact that there is a lot of money in town has led to the fact that when you have it, you lack for little - including happiness.

Discussion finished up with a belief that we must, as a whole, begin to change our attitudes, especially towards women getting as better education and thus allowing them more opportunity for getting better jobs. For if the most valuable asset of a man is his earning power, perhaps women may have to start to view things that way as well. It certainly was an interesting week and one which got the students starting to think about things. There is a disparity between men and women and many of these differences may be as a result of the media and the stereotyping which often goes on. One thought that is sure to stay with the students is the depressing view of how life is so very hard for many people, especially older women and women who are the head of single parent families. Hopefully, many of the comments and facts will not be lost on the students and they will do something about the situation. The girls definitely want to have careers and money of their own. The boys don't want to have to task care of a family all by themselves so there may be pressure to have their girlfriends, wives, or significant others stay in school and work for better, and higher paying jobs.

The students all seemed to be interested in the topic as well as the way the information was presented. They are definitely looking forward to J.C.'s return in March-April - as am I. It was an eye opening experience for some. The question is whether it will be a long term opener or will it be another piece of information forgotten over the weekend. Personally, I think it will be one which they do note and take seriously as other information and topics arise which touch on this one.

B 4

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

We are beginning our research project by gathering information about some of the issues that you might think are important today. Your careful thought and attention in responding is appreciated. *No one in class will see your individual responses.*

PART A: Circle your response.

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age 14 15 16 17 18 19
3. Do you plan on attending a post-secondary institution after you graduate?
   Yes No
4. Do you work part-time after school or on weekends?
   Yes No

PART B: Circle your response.

How much confidence do you have in the people in the following institutions?

	A great deal	Quite a lot	Somewhat (not sure)	Very Little	None at all
1. the police	1	2	3	4	5
2. the courts	1	2	3	4	5
3. this school	1	2	3	4	5
4. the business world	1	2	3	4	5
5. the school board	1	2	3	4	5
6. Town Council	1	2	3	4	5
7. Provincial government	1	2	3	4	5
8. Federal government	1	2	3	4	5
9. United Nations	1	2	3	4	5
10.religious organizations	1	2	3	4	5

B 4

PART C:
Circle the response that applies to you.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Response	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I like school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My life right now is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I worry a lot about school.	1	2	3	4	5
›rry a lot about work.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am treated fairly by my teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
6.I feel I have too little power in school.	1	2	3	4	5
7.I feel safe at school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I feel safe at home.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I feel safe in the community at large.	1	2	3	4	5
10.I think women have an equal chance of making it in the world as men.	1	2	3	4	5
11.Females are treated fairly in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
12.Males are treated fairly in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
13.I have lots of confidence.	1	2	3	4	5
14.I can do most things well.	1	2	3	4	5
15.Adults can be trusted more than teenagers.	1	2	3	4	5

B 4

PART D: Sources of Enjoyment Survey

Indicate below the degree of enjoyment you derive from the activities or people listed. Try to think about these items in relative terms.

	A great deal	Quite a bit	Somewhat	Very Little	None at all
1. My car (or driving)	1	2	3	4	5
2. My job	1	2	3	4	5
3. Youth groups	1	2	3	4	5
4. Religious groups	1	2	3	4	5
5. School	1	2	3	4	5
6. VCR movies	1	2	3	4	5
7. Television	1	2	3	4	5
8. Sports	1	2	3	4	5
9. My own room	1	2	3	4	5
10.A boyfriend or a girlfriend	1	2	3	4	5
11.Dating	1	2	3	4	5
12.Listening to music	1	2	3	4	5
13.Friendships	1	2	3	4	5
14.Pets	1	2	3	4	5
15.Drinking	1	2	3	4	5
16.Parties (where I drink)	1	2	3	4	5
17.Parties (where I do not drink)	1	2	3	4	5
18. Parents	1	2	3	4	5
19. Drug use (other than alcohol)	1	2	3	4	5
20.Teachers	1	2	3	4	5

B 4

PART E: VALUES SURVEY

Given your own priorities and beliefs, how would you rate the following in terms of their importance in your life? Try to get a general sense of the relative weight you place on each value.

	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Of very little importance
1.Generosity	1	2	3	4
2.Imagination	1	2	3	4
3.Creativity	1	2	3	4
4.Working hard	1	2	3	4
5.Politeness	1	2	3	4
6.Intelligence	1	2	3	4
7.Forgiveness	1	2	3	4
8.Humour	1	2	3	4
9.Honesty	1	2	3	4
10.Cleanliness	1	2	3	4

PART F: VALUED GOALS SURVEY

Given your own priorities and beliefs, how would you rate the following in terms of their importance in your life? Try to get a general sense of the relative weight you place on each value.

	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Of very little importance
1.Recognition	1	2	3	4
2.Family life	1	2	3	4
3.Concern for others	1	2	3	4
4.Cultural-group heritage	1	2	3	4
5.Being popular	1	2	3	4
6.Religious-group involvement	1	2	3	4
7.A comfortable life	1	2	3	4
8.Being respected	1	2	3	4
9.Success in what I do	1	2	3	4
10.Having choices	1	2	3	4
11.Being loved	1	2	3	4
12.Friendship	1	2	3	4
13.Freedom	1	2	3	4

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PART G: ISSUES SURVEY

Below are listed some personal and social concerns that other teens have reported in their schools, communities and in the country. Indicate how you would rank these as concerns to you.

	Very serious	Serious	Not sure	Not serious at all
1.world poverty	1	2	3	4
2.violence in this school	1	2	3	4
3.violence in schools generally	1	2	3	4
4.lack of Canadian unity	1	2	3	4
5.native-white relations	1	2	3	4
6.nuclear war	1	2	3	4
7.government incompetence	1	2	3	4
8.the economy	1	2	3	4
9.physical violence against women	1	2	3	4
10.psychological abuse of women	1	2	3	4
11.discrimination against women	1	2	3	4
12.racial discrimination	1	2	3	4
13.teenage suicide	1	2	3	4
14.drug abuse	1	2	3	4
15.child abuse	1	2	3	4
16.the environment (pollution)	1	2	3	4
17.unemployment	1	2	3	4
18.the Grade 12 diploma exams	1	2	3	4
19.French-English relations	1	2	3	4
20.political corruption	1	2	3	4
21.gay rights	1	2	3	4
22.my personal problems	1	2	3	4
23.my weight	1	2	3	4
24.my sexual orientation	1	2	3	4
25.my friends' problems	1	2	3	4
26.AIDS	1	2	3	4
27.an unwanted pregnancy (for me or a friend)	1	2	3	4
28.my personal fear of getting a STD (sexually trasmitted disease)	1	2	3	4
29 problems in my family	1	2	3	4
30.excessive stress in my life	1	2	3	4

B 5

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE - SUMMARY OF RESULTS

PART B:

How much confidence do you have in the people in the following institutions?

	A great deal/quite a lot						Somewhat						Very little/not at all					
	Total		Males		Females		Total		Males		Females		Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. the police	51	72.9	17	63.0	34	79.1	17	24.3	9	33.3	8	18.6	2	2.9	1	3.7	1	2.3
2. the courts	39	55.7	16	59.3	23	53.5	20	28.6	7	25.9	13	30.2	11	15.7	4	14.8	7	16.3
3. this school	30	42.9	19	70.4	11	25.6	25	35.7	7	25.9	19	44.2	15	21.4	1	3.7	14	32.5
4. the business world	23	32.9	11	40.7	12	27.9	27	38.6	6	22.2	21	48.8	20	28.6	10	37.0	10	23.3
5. the school board	11	15.7	7	25.9	4	9.3	36	51.4	13	48.1	23	53.5	23	32.9	7	25.9	16	37.2
6. Town Council	17	24.3	9	33.3	8	18.6	26	37.1	9	33.3	17	39.5	27	38.6	9	33.3	18	41.9
7. Provincial government	12	17.1	3	11.1	9	20.9	26	37.1	10	37.0	16	37.2	32	45.7	14	51.9	18	41.9
8. Federal government	12	17.1	3	11.1	9	20.9	25	35.7	6	22.2	24	55.8	33	47.1	18	66.7	15	34.9
9. United Nations	45	64.3	21	77.8	24	55.8	15	21.4	3	11.1	12	27.9	10	14.3	3	11.1	7	16.3
10.religious organizations	21	30.0	4	14.8	17	39.5	24	34.3	10	37.0	14	32.5	25	35.7	13	48.1	12	27.9

PART C:

	Strongly Agree/Agree						No Response					
	Total		Males		Females		Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. I like school.	53	75.7	20	74.1	33	76.7	13	18.6	6	22.2	7	16.3
2. My life right now is enjoyable.	58	82.9	24	88.9	34	79.1	4	5.7	0	0	4	9.3
3. I worry a lot about school.	19	27.1	12	44.4	7	16.3	11	15.7	4	14.8	7	16.3
4. I worry a lot about work.	15	21.4	3	11.1	12	27.9	22	31.4	7	25.9	15	34.9
5. I am treated fairly by my teachers.	48	68.6	19	70.4	29	67.4	15	21.4	7	25.9	8	18.6
6.I feel I have too little power in school.	28	40.0	8	29.6	20	46.5	30	42.9	12	44.4	18	41.9
7.I feel safe at school.	53	75.7	19	70.4	34	79.1	8	11.4	5	18.5	3	7.0
8. I feel safe at home.	60	85.7	26	96.3	34	79.1	8	11.4	1	3.7	7	16.3
9. I feel safe in the community at large.	39	55.7	18	66.7	21	48.8	11	15.7	3	11.1	8	18.6
10.I think women have an equal chance of making it in the world as men.	39	55.7	19	70.4	20	46.5	9	12.9	3	11.1	6	13.9
11.Females are treated fairly in this school.	49	70.0	24	88.9	25	58.1	16	22.9	2	7.4	14	32.5
12.Males are treated fairly in this school.	55	78.6	24	88.9	31	72.1	11	15.7	2	7.4	9	20.9
13.I have lots of confidence.	43	61.4	24	88.9	19	44.2	16	22.9	3	11.1	13	30.2
14.I can do most things well.	55	78.6	24	88.9	31	72.1	7	10.0	3	11.1	4	9.3
15.Adults can be trusted more than teenagers.	13	18.6	9	33.3	4	9.3	11	15.7	3	11.1	8	18.6

PART C:

1. I like school.
2. My life right now is enjoyable.
3. I worry a lot about school.
4. I worry a lot about work.
5. I am treated fairly by my teachers.
6. I feel I have too little power in school.
7. I feel safe at school.
8. I feel safe at home.
9. I feel safe in the community at large.
10. I think women have an equal chance of making it in the world as men.
11. Females are treated fairly in this school.
12. Males are treated fairly in this school.
13. I have lots of confidence.
14. I can do most things well.
15. Adults can be trusted more than teenagers.

Disagree/Strongly Disagree					
Total		Males		Females	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
4	5.7	1	3.7	3	7.0
8	11.4	3	11.1	5	11.6
21	30.0	11	40.7	10	23.3
33	47.1	17	63.0	16	37.2
7	10.0	1	3.7	6	13.9
12	27.9	7	25.9	5	11.6
9	12.9	3	11.1	6	13.9
2	2.9	0	0	2	4.7
20	28.6	6	22.2	14	32.5
22	31.4	5	18.5	17	39.5
5	7.1	1	3.7	4	9.3
4	5.7	1	3.7	3	7.0
11	15.7	0	0	11	25.6
8	11.4	0	0	8	18.6
46	65.7	15	55.5	31	72.1

PART D: Sources of Enjoyment Survey

Indicate below the degree of enjoyment you derive from the activities or people listed. Try to think about these items in relative terms.

	A great deal/quite a bit						Somewhat					
	Total		Males		Females		Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. My car (or driving)	34	48.6	13	48.1	21	48.8	22	31.4	6	22.2	16	37.2
2. My job	19	27.1	9	33.3	10	23.3	23	32.9	8	29.6	15	34.9
3. Youth groups	14	20.0	7	25.9	7	16.3	17	24.3	1	3.7	16	37.2
4. Religious groups	6	8.6	3	11.1	3	7.0	12	17.1	2	7.4	10	23.3
5. School	27	38.6	12	44.4	15	34.9	32	45.7	12	44.4	20	46.5
6. VCR movies	38	54.3	14	51.9	24	55.8	27	38.6	10	37.0	17	39.5
7. Television	30	42.9	14	51.9	16	37.2	29	41.4	7	25.9	22	51.2
8. Sports	52	74.3	22	81.5	30	69.8	11	15.7	3	11.1	8	18.6
9. My own room	42	60.0	13	48.1	29	67.4	15	21.4	7	25.9	8	18.6
10. A boyfriend or girlfriend	49	70.0	15	55.5	34	79.1	13	18.6	6	22.2	7	16.3
11. Dating	52	74.3	14	51.9	38	88.4	11	15.7	8	29.6	3	7.0
12. Listening to music	54	77.1	18	66.7	36	83.7	13	18.6	6	22.2	7	16.3
13. Friendships	68	97.1	25	92.6	43	100.0	2	2.9	2	7.4	0	0
14. Pets	36	51.4	10	37.0	26	60.5	18	25.7	8	29.6	10	23.3
15. Drinking	24	34.3	7	25.9	17	39.5	18	25.7	4	14.8	14	32.5
16. Parties (where I drink)	30	42.9	8	29.6	22	51.2	14	20.0	6	22.2	8	18.6
17. Parties (where I do not drink)	34	48.6	11	40.7	23	53.5	26	37.1	10	37.0	16	37.2
18. Parents	28	40.0	11	40.7	17	39.5	27	38.6	13	48.1	14	32.5
19. Drug use (other than alcohol)	6	8.6	3	11.1	3	7.0	9	12.9	1	3.7	8	18.6
20. Teachers	11	15.7	4	14.8	7	16.3	35	50.0	11	40.7	24	55.8

PART D: Sources of Enjoyment Survey

Indicate below the degree of enjoyment you derive from the activities or people listed. Try to think about these items in relative terms.

Very little/None at all

	Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. My car (or driving)	14	20.0	8	29.6	6	13.9
2. My job	28	40.0	10	37.0	18	41.9
3. Youth groups	39	55.7	19	70.1	20	46.5
4. Religious groups	52	74.3	22	81.5	30	69.8
5. School	11	15.7	3	11.1	8	18.6
6. VCR movies	5	7.1	3	11.1	2	4.7
7. Television	11	15.7	6	22.2	5	11.6
8. Sports	7	10.0	2	7.4	5	11.6
9. My own room	13	18.6	7	25.9	6	13.9
10. A boyfriend or girlfriend	8	11.4	6	22.2	2	4.7
11. Dating	7	10.0	5	18.5	2	4.7
12. Listening to music	3	4.3	3	11.1	0	0
13. Friendships	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. Pets	16	22.9	9	33.3	7	16.3
15. Drinking	28	40.0	16	59.3	12	27.9
16. Parties (where I drink)	26	37.1	13	48.1	13	30.2
17. Parties (where I do not drink)	10	14.3	6	22.2	4	9.3
18. Parents	15	21.4	3	11.1	12	27.9
19. Drug use (other than alcohol)	55	78.6	23	85.2	32	74.4
20. Teachers	24	34.3	12	44.4	12	27.9

PART E: VALUES SURVEY

Given your own priorities and beliefs, how would you rate the following in terms of their importance in your life? Try to get a general sense of the relative weight you place on each value.

Very Important/ Quite Important

	Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.Generosity	34	48.6	20	74.0	14	32.5
2.Imagination	31	44.3	11	40.7	20	46.5
3.Creativity	28	40.0	12	44.4	16	37.2
4.Working hard	54	77.1	20	74.0	34	79.1
5.Politeness	57	81.4	21	77.8	36	83.7
6.Intelligence	61	87.1	24	88.9	37	86.0
7.Forgiveness	49	70.0	15	55.5	34	79.1
8.Humour	58	82.9	22	81.5	36	83.7
9.Honesty	70	100.0	27	100.0	43	100.0
10.Cleanliness	59	84.3	22	81.5	37	86.0

Somewhat Important

	Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.Generosity	24	34.3	6	22.2	18	41.9
2.Imagination	29	41.4	13	48.1	16	37.2
3.Creativity	31	44.3	12	44.4	19	44.2
4.Working hard	12	17.1	5	18.5	7	16.3
5.Politeness	10	14.3	6	22.2	4	9.3
6.Intelligence	7	10.0	3	11.1	4	9.3
7.Forgiveness	18	25.7	9	33.3	9	20.9
8.Humour	10	14.3	4	14.8	6	13.9
9.Honesty	0	0	0	0	0	0
10.Cleanliness	7	10.0	2	7.4	5	11.6

Of very little importance

	Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.Generosity	2	2.9	1	3.7	1	2.3
2.Imagination	10	14.3	3	11.1	7	16.3
3.Creativity	11	15.7	3	11.1	8	18.6
4.Working hard	4	5.7	2	7.4	2	4.7
5.Politeness	3	4.3	0	0	3	7.0
6.Intelligence	2	2.9	0	0	2	4.7
7.Forgiveness	3	4.3	3	11.1	0	0
8.Humour	2	2.9	1	3.7	1	2.3
9.Honesty	0	0	0	0	0	0
10.Cleanliness	4	5.7	3	11.1	1	2.3

PART F: VALUED GOALS SURVEY

Given your own priorities and beliefs, how would you rate the following in terms of their importance in your life? Try to get a general sense of the relative weight you place on each value.

	Very important/ Quite Important						Somewhat Important					
	Total		Males		Females		Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.Recognition	45	64.3	19	70.4	26	60.5	24	34.3	8	29.6	16	37.2
2.Family life	56	80.0	22	81.5	34	79.1	11	15.7	5	18.5	6	13.9
3.Concern for others	57	81.4	21	77.8	36	83.7	12	17.1	5	18.5	7	16.3
4.Cultural-group heritage	6	8.6	2	7.4	4	9.3	26	37.1	11	40.7	15	34.9
5.Being popular	26	37.1	11	40.7	15	34.9	26	37.1	14	51.6	12	27.9
6.Religious-group involvement	11	15.7	3	11.1	8	18.6	22	31.4	8	29.6	14	32.5
7.A comfortable life	65	92.9	25	92.6	40	93.0'	5	7.1	2	7.4	3	7.0'
8.Being respected	66	94.3	25	92.6	41	95.3	4	5.7	-	7.4	2	4.7
9.Success in what I do	66	94.3	24	88.9	42	97.7	2	2.9	1	3.7	1	2.3
10.Having choices	62	88.6	22	81.5	40	93.0	8	11.4	5	18.5	3	7.0
11.Being loved	66	94.3	27	100.0	39	90.7	3	4.3	0	0	3	7.0
12.Friendship	68	97.1	25	92.6	43	100.0	2	2.9	2	7.4	0	0
13.Freedom	62	88.6	23	85.2	39	90.7	8	11.4	4	14.8	4	9.3

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PART F: VALUED GOALS SURVEY

Given your own priorities and beliefs, how would you rate the following in terms of their importance in your life? Try to get a general sense of the relative weight you place on each value.

Of very little importance

	Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.Recognition	1	1.4	0	0	1	2.3
2.Family life	3	4.3	0	0	3	7.0
3.Concern for others	1	1.4	1	3.7	0	0
4.Cultural-group heritage	38	54.3	14	51.9	24	55.8
5.Being popular	18	25.7	2	7.4	16	37.2
6.Religious-group involvement	37	52.9	16	59.3	21	48.8
7.A comfortable life	0	0	0	0	0	0
8.Being respected	0	0	0	0	0	0
9.Success in what I do	2	2.9	2	7.4	0	0
10.Having choices	0	0	0	0	0	0
11.Being loved	1	1.4	0	0	1	2.3
12.Friendship	0	0	0	0	0	0
13.Freedom	0	0	0	0	0	0

PART G: ISSUES SURVEY

Below are listed some personal and social concerns that other teens have reported in their schools, communities and in the country. Indicate how you would rank these as concerns to you.

	Very serious/Serious					
	Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.world poverty	55	78.6	22	81.5	33	76.7
2.violence in this school	23	32.9	14	51.9	9	20.9
3.violence in schools generally	42	60.0	19	70.4	23	53.5
4.lack of Canadian unity	35	50.0	14	51.9	21	48.8
5.native-white relations	34	48.6	11	40.7	23	53.5
6.nuclear war	51	72.9	21	77.8	30	69.8
7.government incompetence	42	60.0	18	66.7	24	55.8
8. the economy	53	75.7	23	85.2	30	69.8
9.physical violence against women	65	92.9	26	96.3	39	90.7
10.psychological abuse of women	62	88.6	22	81.5	40	93.0
11.discrimination against women	62	88.6	21	77.8	41	95.3
12.racial discrimination	67	95.7	26	96.3	41	95.3
13.teenage suicide	51	72.9	19	70.4	32	74.4
14.drug abuse	51	72.9	21	77.8	30	69.8
15.child abuse	64	91.4	25	92.6	39	90.7
16.the environment (pollution)	59	84.3	24	88.9	35	81.4
17.unemployment	46	65.7	19	70.4	27	62.8
18.the Grade 12 diploma exams	41	58.6	22	81.5	19	44.2
19.French-English relations	21	30.0	9	33.3	12	27.9
20.political corruption	29	41.4	16	59.3	13	30.2
21.gay rights	18	25.7	5	18.5	13	30.2
22.my personal problems	40	57.1	15	55.5	25	58.1
23.my weight	27	38.6	8	29.6	19	44.2
24.my sexual orientation	21	30.0	12	44.4	9	20.9
25.my friends' problems	41	58.6	14	51.9	27	62.8
26.AIDS	65	92.9	26	96.3	39	90.7
27.an unwanted pregnancy (for me or a friend)	55	78.6	22	81.5	33	76.7
28.my personal fear of getting a STD (sexually trasmitted disease)	51	72.9	21	77.8	30	69.8
29 problems in my family	44	62.9	15	55.5	29	61.7
30.excessive stress in my life	34	48.6	10	37.0	24	55.8

PART G: ISSUES SURVEY

Below are listed some personal and social concerns that other teens have reported in their schools, communities and in the country. Indicate how you would rank these as concerns to you.

Not Sure

	Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.world poverty	13	18.6	3	11.1	10	23.3
2.violence in this school	31	44.3	7	25.9	24	55.8
3.violence in schools generally	20	28.6	6	22.2	14	32.5
4.lack of Canadian unity	27	38.6	8	29.6	19	44.2
5.native-white relations	26	37.1	10	37.0	16	37.2
6.nuclear war	14	20.0	4	14.8	10	23.3
7.government incompetence	22	31.4	6	22.2	16	37.2
8. the economy	13	18.6	3	11.1	10	23.3
9.physical violence against women	4	5.7	1	3.7	3	7.0
10.psychological abuse of women	7	10.0	4	14.8	3	7.0
11.discrimination against women	6	8.6	4	14.8	2	4.7
12.racial discrimination	3	4.3	1	3.7	2	4.7
13.teenage suicide	17	24.3	6	22.2	11	25.6
14.drug abuse	14	20.0	4	14.8	10	23.3
15.child abuse	5	7.1	2	7.4	3	7.0
16.the environment (pollution)	7	10.0	2	7.4	5	11.6
17.unemployment	17	24.3	6	22.2	11	25.6
18.the Grade 12 diploma exams	22	31.4	5	18.5	17	39.5
19.French-English relations	32	45.7	13	48.1	19	44.2
20.political corruption	26	37.1	9	33.3	17	39.5
21.gay rights	23	32.9	10	37.0	13	30.2
22.my personal problems	22	31.4	8	29.6	14	32.5
23.my weight	12	17.1	4	14.8	8	18.6
24.my sexual orientation	25	35.7	6	22.2	19	44.2
25.my friends' problems	24	34.3	10	37.0	14	32.5
26.AIDS	3	4.3	1	3.7	2	4.7
27.an unwanted pregnancy (for me or a friend)	7	10.0	2	7.4	5	11.6
28.my personal fear of getting a STD (sexually trasmitted disease)	11	15.7	3	11.1	8	18.6
29 problems in my family	14	20.0	3	11.1	11	25.6
30.excessive stress in my life	23	32.9	11	40.7	12	27.9

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PART G: ISSUES SURVEY

Below are listed some personal and social concerns that other teens have reported in their schools, communities and in the country. Indicate how you would rank these as concerns to you.

Not serious at all

	Total		Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.world poverty	2	2.9	2	7.4	0	0
2.violence in this school	16	22.9	6	22.2	10	23.3
3.violence in schools generally	8	11.4	2	7.4	6	13.9
4.lack of Canadian unity	8	11.4	5	18.5	3	7.0
5.native-white relations	10	14.3	6	22.2	4	9.3
6.nuclear war	5	7.1	2	7.4	3	7.0
7.government incompetence	6	8.6	3	11.1	3	7.0
8. the economy	4	5.7	1	3.7	3	7.0
9.physical violence against women	1	1.4	0	0	1	2.3
10.psychological abuse of women	1	1.4	1	3.7	0	0
11.discrimination against women	2	2.9	2	7.4	0	0
12.racial discrimination	0	0	0	0	0	0
13.teenage suicide	2	2.9	2	7.4	0	0
14.drug abuse	5	7.1	2	7.4	3	7.0
15.child abuse	1	1.4	0	0	1	2.3
16.the environment (pollution)	4	5.7	1	3.7	3	7.0
17.unemployment	7	10.0	2	7.4	5	11.6
18.the Grade 12 diploma exams	7	10.0	0	0	7	16.3
19.French-English relations	17	24.3	5	18.5	12	27.9
20.political corruption	15	21.4	2	7.4	13	30.2
21.gay rights	29	41.4	12	44.4	17	39.5
22.my personal problems	8	11.4	4	14.8	4	9.3
23.my weight	31	44.3	15	55.5	16	37.2
24.my sexual orientation	24	34.3	9	33.3	15	34.9
25.my friends' problems	5	7.1	3	11.1	2	4.7
26.AIDS	2	2.9	0	.0	2	4.7
27.an unwanted pregnancy (for me or a friend)	8	11.4	3	11.1	5	11.6
28.my personal fear of getting a STD (sexually trasmitted disease)	8	11.4	3	11.1	5	11.6
29 problems in my family	12	17.1	9	33.3	3	7.0
30.excessive stress in my life	13	18.6	6	22.2	7	16.3

B 6

Quantum Leap Assignment

Dealing with Our Concerns or Issues: A *Quantum Leap?*

Consider your responses to the **Issues Survey**.
From the list please identify the five most important issues in your life right now.
Feel free to add any issues that were not identified in the list.

1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____
5._____

ASSIGNMENT:

Have you ever watched *Quantum Leap*? In this television series, Sam Beckett is thrown through time and space into the bodies of different characters. In each case Sam is challenged to solve some problem or prevent some disaster from occurring. Imagine you are zapped suddenly into the body of any individual that might be able to deal with the issue(s) you have identified. You have 48 hours to take advantage of your new situation. *Whose body would you occupy and what would you do?*

Remember, this does not necessarily have to be a famous person - select the individual that you feel could most directly influence the issues/concerns you have.

Some suggestions for writing:

*think carefully about who you would occupy since the purpose is to help you in *your* life in the long term
*you might find getting a picture of the person you plan to occupy might help stimulate writing
*a little background research on the individual (if you need it) might help as well
*imagine the possibilities ...

Format: You may wish to complete this assignment in any one of a variety of ways: as a letter describing what you did while occupying the *body* (written upon your return), an essay projecting forward explaining what you might want to do, or an audio tape diary describing yourself as you occupy the body for 48 hours.

Due: _____

B 6

Quantum Leap Evaluation Guide

Significance of the Body Capture: The issues or concerns identified in your *Issues Survey* are clearly related to the Body you choose to capture. There is *plausibility* and *consistency* in the selection of actions your Body attempts to carry out. There is a sense of *personal commitment* and *engagement* with the captured Body.

/10

Description: *Clarity* in the development of the activities engaged in by the Body you captured. Attention to *detail* and *story line*. Events are described in such way that the reader understands the challenges and opportunities associated with a *Quantum Leap*. (Based on Student Resources: 1. Henry Jenkins *Quantum Leap* handout, 2. Viewing of an episode of *Quantum Leap* in class).

/10

Quality of Presentation: Effective use of the medium selected. Written papers and audio presentations must meet appropriate standards for quality of expression established in class to date.

/5

Total: 25 points

The Leap!

Bob was a guy who often had thoughts of guys and what they were about. He had an uncontrollable desire for men. He knew it was wrong now a days to think this way but he couldn't help himself. I was sent there to him his way through all the confusion and misunderstanding he was going through.

All I know is my name is Mark and I'm gay and have the power to make Bob see through his problems. I have no feelings for Bob but he may start to have feelings for me after awhile. He hasn't met such an understanding and kind person that has the same thoughts as he does.

I begin to get involved in some of the same classes as Bob has in school hoping to get closer to him. I can't move to fast because he might not take a liking to me, and that is the last thing I wanted to happen. I sat next to him in Physics, and Math. Social was a problem though, I was all the way across the room and couldn't see his actions from there. Being farther away was a disadvantage because I couldn't see what he was saying, I couldn't see what he was writing. The more I know about him the easier it will be to get close to him.

As days and weeks go on I get to know more and more about Bob. Then one day my big brake comes! We have a social group project to do and I was partnered up with Bob. This would allow me to get closer to him and to understand what he is going through.

Bob and I decide to get together that night to go over our plans for the assignment. I showed up at his house at 8:30 pm, as I entered the house it seemed to be a normal loving home. Just your average life! We got along well that night and we seemed to become good friends, he was a nice open kinda guy which made it easier to get to know his thoughts. Which I started at right away.

I started to ask questions like, do you have a girlfriend, have ever had a girlfriend, are you really interested in girls? His response was always "No".

I began to tell him about myself and how I was gay. I told him not to worry though because I wouldn't try anything on him, "I stay strictly to my own kind", I said. It didn't seem to bother hem thought he took it quite easily.

As weeks sent on Bob began to open up and tell me about his thoughts and fears. One of them was whether it was wrong to be gay? I told him it was a natural thing that happens, people get attracted to people every day. Whether or not it's male or female you still have the same feelings when it comes down to it. Bob said he has some undescribable thoughts that run through his head about men that he thought should only be about women. I told him not to hide his feelings to let himself be who he wants to be and not to lock these feelings up inside him.

Through our talks and carings Bob began to work out his problem that its okay to be gay as long as you are being who you want to be. Don't let anyone pressure you in or out of something you're not. Just let it happen.

This case was about a guy who was scared to let his real feeling show because of the actions of others around him. He was

scared to be who he was, he was scared to be himself. Is that how you want your children to grow up scared of everything and think they're wrong. Love is a chemistry that happens whether you fall in love with someone of the same sex or the opposite sex. It is still love and it feels the same no matter what. Its wrong to say their love is wrong and that they can't love a person of the same sex. Would you like someone to say you can't love your husband, or wife, etc. I think not!

The End to a Slaughter

Zap! The flash of blue light streams before my eyes once again. I'm in a womans body this time, doing my hair in a wash room. I notice a polices uniform on the hook of the door, I put it on.

A man comes in, "Hurry honey! You're going to be late for work!"

I finish getting ready in the bathroom. I have breakfast and leave to work, where ever that is. Al appears in my car. "Who am I?"

"Amanda Barron, your partner is Joel Lee. You go down to that next intersection and make a right, three blocks later take a left and then the next right is where your station is."

"Why am I here?"

"Haven't figured it out yet. Eveything in your personal life checks out fine. There's nothing wrong with the job Ziggy says you have a normal week. I'll try and find some more information." He leaves into the blue.

The day was nothing out of the ordinary. I went home where I found my husband Jack and daughter Cara waiting to have supper with me. After supper I sit down with my husband to watch the evening news. Someone else has been killled. Police think it's linked to the previous murders.

Al appears, "Carlie I figured out what your here for. Ziggy says there is a 92.4?% chance your here to stop Jeffrey Dahmer from killing again. He's the one that just killed the guy on the news."

I go into the kitchen so Jack doesn't hear me talk. "What? How? I'm not even on the case?"

"Some time this week you get a call at work from Dahmers neighbor reporting a disturbance in the peace. It goes down as domestic violence and nothing is done."

"I'll be waiting for the call."

Two days have passed and there hasn't been a call like Al has described, maybe today will be different. At 5:54 just before the shift was over the call came in. I volunteered Joel and I to go. When we got to the scene we found Dahmer and the boy in the streets. By the time we got out of the car and walked up to them the boy was crying in Dahmer's arms. Dolmer Convinced Joel that it was just a lovers spat. There was nothing I could do to take him into custody. On the home I tried to convince Joel that there was more to it, that I had a strange feeling about it. He wouldn't listen.

When I got home Al appeared again. "Carlie You have to do something. There is a 98.7% chance that Dahmer is going to kill him tonight."

"I'll call Joel."

"Well you better hurry it up!" Al disappears into the light once again.

"Hi, Joel are you coming with me to Dahmer's? Something is going down I can tell."

"Who?"

"The last call we had today."

"Carlie, give it up. I'm spending time with my family, the same thing you should be doing."

"I'm going with or without you! Now what's it going to be? Time is running out!"

"God! Carlie it was just a little lovers spat!"

"Fine. I'll go with out you."

"No! Wait I'll meet you there."

I told Jack there was an emergency and left. I arrived there before Joel. I began to wait for him.

"What are you doing? Go in and save the boy!" Al yelled.

"I can't there is no charge and he will get away free."

"So your just going to stand by and watch?"

"No, I'll wait for something suspicious. Where is the body found?"

"In a near by park stuffed in a garbage bag. The chance that he was killed in that house is 98.9%.

Screams and loud noises were coming from the house. I started moving up the walk wondering where my partner was. As I approached the house it grew silent. I opened the front door with my gun pointed out in front of me. As I took a step in I noticed the guy that was crying earlier on today laying on the floor. He had huge pools of blood beside his body. Parts of his left arm were missing as well. Out of the blue Dolmer grabs me and puts a knife at my throat.

In a deep cold voice Dahmer spoke, "Put the gun down nice and slowly. That's it, now I'm going to have a nice refreshing dessert from all the males I ate. Never craved a female until I seen you coming up my sidewalk."

BANG! Dahmer was released his grip on me. I turn around to find Joel standing in the doorway. He shot Dahmer in the back. Both The boy and Dahmer were rushed to the hospital.

An investigation was held. I got a search warrant For Dahmer's house. Remains of other bodies were found in his freezer. Dahmer pleaded guilty for all his murders he had committed. I wondered why time put me in the middle of the killing sprees not the beginning. I guess I'll never Know.

Once the boy who Dolmer assultted was in a stable condition I found my self leaping into the body of Mrs. John F. Kennedy.

B 9

"Nuclear Leap"

My name is Danny, for several years I have been concerned with the threat of nuclear war. I've decided to leap into the body of Harry S. Truman, former president of the United States, 48 hours before his decision to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan.

August 5 1945. I leap into the body of Harry Truman. I am surprised to find myself at the head of a large oak table with several men at either side. We seem to be discussing the war. To my right was a man named Stimson who is my chief advisor.

"We would like a quick surrender by the Japanese" said a small serious man to my left.

"Yes definitely, and we should use any means possible, we cannot afford to send in 10,000 men to fight when we have such a simple alternative" said Stimson quickly.

"This does seem to be a logical choice, but do these men realize the devastation that will occur?" I thought to myself.

"Did you not read the report from White Sands Stimson" snapped an angry man seated at the far right of the table. " This bomb will destroy over half the city".

"And with a population of over 320,000 the results will be devastating" argued another.

"Yes but the Japanese have denied our surrender demand" said Stimson.

The logical choice was the bomb even though I knew the consequences. Was I to send thousand more American soldiers to their grave or simply send one more B-29 over Hiroshima to

B 9

drop only one more bomb? After all we had already dropped more than 40,000 tons of bombs on Japan already, would one more make that much of a difference?. My mission was to leap into Truman's body and stop the bomb from being dropped, but it isn't an easy decision now that I'm faced with the facts. We had tested the bomb at White Sands New Mexico and knew of the incredible destruction it was capable of. Still some of my colleagues could not comprehend anything so harsh. They could not understand my hesitation. I was very rushed for time and the men waited impatiently for my response.

"We will move ahead with the bombing of Hiroshima tomorrow, Aug 6." I said, overwhelmed with such a decision. I couldn't let my country down. A quick end to a world war seemed so enticing.

As I tried to sleep I could not reason with my decision. All the deaths I would be responsible for. Furthermore, when this bomb is used every other military power in the world will want atomic bombs and this would put the entire world in danger.

"Hello this is president Truman". I said anxiously over the phone. "Cancel the order to bomb Hiroshima, we will send troops to seize Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagasaki and Hiroshima. and force their military to surrender within 24 hours". The army major took my order and I hung up the phone very relieved. I couldn't go through with such a horrific act.

The troops took over the major cities and Japan surrendered passively, ending World War II.

In a few hours I returned back into my own body in 1995.

only to find that my decision had backfired. The atomic bomb formula had been given to almost every country. Iraq and Iran are threatening to destroy each other. The United Nations are struggling to disarm the thousands of nuclear weapons now so easy to produce. Maybe if I would have let Hiroshima be an example, the countries of the world would be more cautious of the real dangers of nuclear war and deal with the threat responsibly. Small military lead countries are destroying each other and poisoning neighbouring countries with radio active fallout. If the superpowers of the world go to war now, the earth is almost certainly doomed.

"Brigetta's Leap"

A bright green light flashed as the woman was transported into another body. Trying to find her way back into her own time and having to help others along the way. The beautiful and intelligent young woman one of these times hopes that a leap will be the leap home.

Looking into the mirror the female leaper saw herself as a blond haired, blue-eyed German woman. She had leaped back in time to the year 1890, and she herself was 20 years of age. The sound of a door knocker suddenly rang through the room. In the mirror the woman looked at herself once more before going down to answer the door. On her way down her invisible travelling companion explained to her why she had been transported to this time. Her job was to change the birth of a tyrant. The name of the woman whose body she occupied was Brigetta Hertz. Brigetta at this time had two suitors, one was a young, powerful military officer and the other a sincere and kind Lutheran pastor. Brigetta Hertz was to receive propositions of marriage from both her suitors soon and she would have to make a wise decision.

The woman prepared to answer the door, and the person waiting on the other side was the Lutheran pastor. He was there to pick Brigetta up for their date. They spent the evening enjoying each others company and having fun together. The following evening Brigetta went out with her other suitor. A man of high military status and stern convictions, this man was not one to be trifled with. When Brigetta went out with him she found herself charmed, wined and dined and spending time with the society's elite.

Within the week both men had proposed to Brigetta and a decision had to be made. Moreover, the woman now inside of Brigetta had a decision to make. Assessing the characters and personalities of each man carefully the woman inside of Brigetta made a decision. This decision would affect the future of the world; a future she had known to be bad. The woman leaper chose to marry the loving and caring Lutheran pastor. As she told both suitors of her decision the green light flashed once more and the woman leaper was transported into another time, and Brigetta Hertz was returned back to her world and marriage.

As the years passed Brigetta's marriage was happy, as she gave birth to a son. As the child grew into a man, he went into politics and was known as a man of wise decisions, and kind heart. Adolf Hitler was a man to whom people looked to for support; not someone to be feared.

Appendix C

C 1 Read backs: Monday, April 19 - Thursday, April 22
C 2 Pregress and Progress (Student Assignment)
C 3 *Dying to be Thin:* A Case Study of Pregression
C 4 *Grand Canyon* Assignment
C 5 *Grand Canyon* Student Pregression Charts (Samples 1 - 4)
C 6 Student Story: "Learning by trial and error"
C 7 Student Story: "Junkyard of Dreams"
C 8 Student Poem: "Scum"

Read Back from Monday, April 19th:

The preamble to the film *Dying To Be Thin*, brought some interesting comments to light. All three classes, SS 20A, SS 10C and SS 20D all had difficulty in coming up with a definition as the what the term "No" really meant. All three classes felt that some of the criteria for harassment was too general to be able to agree with. The 20A brought up the idea that maybe if flowers were involved, harassment might not be the order of the day. The 20D's, on the other hand, used the determining factor as more of what type of person it was. If a "geek", then that was harassment but if the person was okay then there was no problem. Another interesting point brought up by the 20 D's was that the girls, by in large, did not feel harassed by their peers at school but felt moreso when at outings with older people.

The film itself generally held the attention of all the students. Most of the guys were riveted to the film when the models were on but came up with crass comments when the obese people were on. Comments ranged from the numbers of double chins, to the fact that she needs to get some exercise and on to "she must be a very serious couch potato". The girls were much quieter when the fat people were on and not too concerned about the skinny models. It was almost as if they didn't worry because they couldn't be like them.

It also tells one something about the values the kids have as when the effeminate man from the modeling agency spoke, there was widespread laughter. They truly have little or no tolerance for homosexuals or gays. All classes also laughed with the model bouncing down the street and also for the portrayal of models by the little girl. I expect from their reactions that the students don't take the models very seriously. However, the classes did all become very silent and attentive whenever there was the mention of anorexia or anorexic problems. There were a few cringes at the photo of Karen Carpenter and even a wince and an "ugh" at the picture of a very skinny Cathy Ault. There was also a n incredulous "geez" when Ault made the comment that she wondered how skinny she could get before she died.

There was a reaction, especially by the 20D's as to the difference of weights between the beauty pageant women and normal women of 15 years ago when weights were compared to models and normal women today. Perhaps more incredulous was the belief that one can gain weight by not eating. Learn something new every day. I feel that may of the comments by the boys of the 20A class were just for a smart reaction. Maybe it's cool to say cutting things or blurt without thought. Yet, the 20D's were far more intelligent in their thoughts and comments and their analysis of certain situations. However, I feel that the 10C's took more to heart. Some students seemed a little despondent with the idea that thin is in and there was little chance of them ever being so. I think the taking of the messages to heart was evident when there was quite a bit of laughter when the psychologist mentioned that there is a difference between males and females. There undoubtedly is, but I felt that the laughter, by boys and girls alike, was more of a tension breaker than anything else. Some of the points were being driven home and they were not the points some wanted to hear.

Interest to idea of size as a 20D boy noted that 165 pounds is a large model. After all, one comment did note that all the models looked the same. I don't think they even noted the faces of the models but simply the body types. It seemed to me, as well, that the students paid more attention to the adult speakers and little to the adolescents. Almost like the young held less credibility as they're silly with their diets, etc., but the adults have really been there. Boys also impressed buy the aerobic workout as comments of, "they're just flying" as well as "I wonder how long it takes them to get into those outfits?"

All in all, a good day as the students attentive and aware of what the problem is with society's demands on women having a good body. Not sure how aware they are but should find out tomorrow.

C 1

Readback to Tuesday, April 20th:

After going over the Pregress Charts with all classes, we settled back to watch the first part of the film, *Grand Canyon*. I was very impressed with all three classes in the fact that they seemed to understand and do very well with the charts. I initially felt they would have trouble with the concept, but their answers were clear and on track. Obviously my concerns were unwarranted which was a pleasant surprise.

As to the movie, all three classes were limited to 25-30 minutes after the going over of the assignments. As a result, there wasn't much to garner from the viewing. All classes were impressed with the opening basketball footage, especially the fact that there were real players they could associate with. One interesting comment came out of the SS10 class when one boy questioned a black fellow taking a jump shot. "He's black so why doesn't he dunk it?"

The boys were all very intent on ogling the pretty girls at the Laker game but only one noted the fact that the Laker Girls were also shown. They were all impressed with Steve Martin's car, boys and girls alike. As to other comments, the 20A class was very taken aback by the shooting of Martin for his watch. Also, when Kline's wife was out jogging, the current of muttering was that she was going to be shot as well. Surprise, no sniper but a baby. I was surprised in the fact that perhaps I was the only one surprised that she would keep the child. The class seemed, by their silence, to think that that was the thing to do, I guess.

The 10C class opted to mention a few quiet remarks on Kline's comment to the towing company that in 25 minutes he might be dead. I think it was a concern as to a different way of life. There was also one boy who asked, more to himself than anyone else, "Why does that helicopter keep showing up?" I would like to know as well. The only other thing I saw with them was the fact that the girls were very attentive to all the show while the boys seemed less inclined to follow really closely. Perhaps it's a little too slow for most of them who are used to fast paced shoot em ups ant the sort.

The 20D's were also quiet (perhaps my lecture set that tone), and their only comment of note was a concern when Kline broke down. It was if they new something bad was about to happen.

All in all, I think all three classes paid attention and seemed to enjoy the first part. Hope all goes as well as we continue throughout the entire movie.

Read back to April 21, 1993:

All three classes continued with the viewing of *Grand Canyon*. The film seems to be quite accepted by all. Comments have ranged to," this is a great film", to "it's sure getting better after the first bit which was quite slow". I believe that the classes are quite looking forward to the final half hour we'll show tomorrow.

Reactions have been pretty much standard by all classes and by the sexes as well. There's the oohs and ahs when the baby is involved or of the romance between Roberto and Amanda. There is also the grimacing when Davis is shot as well as when Mack cuts himself. They don't seem to much like the blood from a real wound or an accident while cutting a tomato. Yet, there isn't the same disdain with all the blood and guts of *T2* or *Total Recall*. Perhaps it's because these events are truly believable while the other is just a trumped up movie with gore and blood for show.

The students have been showing a fair bit of cynicism towards some of the characters as well. Nobody seems to believe in Davis or the promises he makes. He seems to lack credibility as the kids see through him. However, the reaction is mixed with Claire's looking after the baby. The boys seem incredulous that she would keep it and not tell the authorities right away and even have the "ya, right" attitude when she tells Mack she was just waiting for him to come home before she phoned. The girls, on the other hand, seem to feel she's done right by looking after it and making it comfortable before taking it back. I'd say all kids are perceiving the secretary as "not playing with a full deck" and why Mack would even go out with her.

The dream sequence was both "really strange", "bizarre", or laughed at. The outset of Mack flying quickly turned off a lot of the students but they came back to the film after his fall. I think they hoped that there were no more dreams after Claire's as several of the kids jumped with her meeting of the strange man at the end. They all had a chuckle over the "miracle" incident with the inappropriateness of having a headache during a miracle. The boys were especially confused as to the logic of the female. Perhaps one part of the show which the kids agreed with was Jane telling Mack that looks were somewhat important when talking of dates. Almost all the students nodded or reacted in some manner to show agreement with Jane - it goes back to their issues exercise from the first segment of the project.

All in all, the students of all classes were very attentive. However, I'd say that the 10C's are the most attentive. They seem to pick up on more of the little things than do the 20's and seem to be more concerned with the personal issues. I feel they are taking more of life's little battles to heart than are the 20's. For what reason I don't know for sure. Maybe they just care more about others than do the 20's. This may be as a result of the fact that we are in the middle of the Human Rights segment of the course and are thus talking about different groups, their rights and the tolerance we should show and share with others.

A few students also questioned that, "if it's so bad down there, why don't people leave"? I did tell them that 510,000 came to L.A. in 1991 but that 580,000 left. It's supposed to be the place where dreams are made so why not try your luck. Finally, I share the same question as one of the 10's pondered, "What's with that helicopter anyway?"

C 1

Read back to April 22:

The end of the film saw, by in large, most of the students enjoying it. The end seemed to be a little slow for them. Perhaps a little too deep for them to fully understand. Yet, the 10's seemed to pick up on a lot more of the little nuances than the 20's and, thus, seemed to understand and enjoy the movie moreso than did either of the 20 classes. On asking the classes what they thought of the movie, the 20's found it a little slow while the 10's seemed to think it was quite good. The comments of the 20's were more to, "it was boring", "it was a cheesy ending", "it was okay". Those who had seen it previously didn't feel it was any better the second time nor did the assignment make it any better to watch. On the other side, the 10's had comments like, "that was good", "it was a little slow but it was okay", "the first time was hard to understand but the second time was a lot better". One student noted, and was widely agreed upon, that the exercise on pregression made it easier to understand the film and was a real boon to them.

The assignments with the pregression charts were done quite well. In an interesting analysis, it seemed that the better oral presentations were done by the boys while the better written presentations were done by the girls. The girls seemed far more organized and understanding of the assignment and its requirements. The boys, however, seemed to know what was expected but weren't able to put it down into writing quite so well. The best thing to note, though, was that all groups had a good understanding of the exercise and did do a fine job regardless of the sex.

At the end of the film I did give a little insight as to life in the bigger US cities: bars on doors and windows (one student acknowledged this by bringing up the case of the man who burned to death in a house fire because he couldn't open the barred gate to his front door), the infatuation type murder of the girl who played the secretary, Dee, the differences in jobs and the opportunities they may hold (eg. waitressing in US is a career opportunity not as part-timer like in Hinton), the watching by people on the streets when Davis was shot just like the man who was beaten to death on a busy sidewalk of New York while onlookers watched and offered no help, and the fact that life is very different in big cities. It was a little depressing for the kids to see that what *Grand Canyon* depicted was real life. That's why I noted the numbers of people who leave L.A. but still more come because of the bright lights and the hope of opportunity and the fulfilling of dreams.

I think the students did enjoy the film and the message. An analogy of the people to the helicopter at the end was promoted but I'm not sure many bought into it. Maybe a touch too deep for their innocent ideas. I was impressed by their attentiveness, especially the 10's, and their understanding of the problems and dilemmas as portrayed by the actors throughout the film. As noted by one 20, it was still tough to accept because L.A. is a big city while ours is a small town. But I believe it to be a very worthwhile venture and exercise. I'm very pleased we did it and equally pleased with the attitude and effort of my classes.

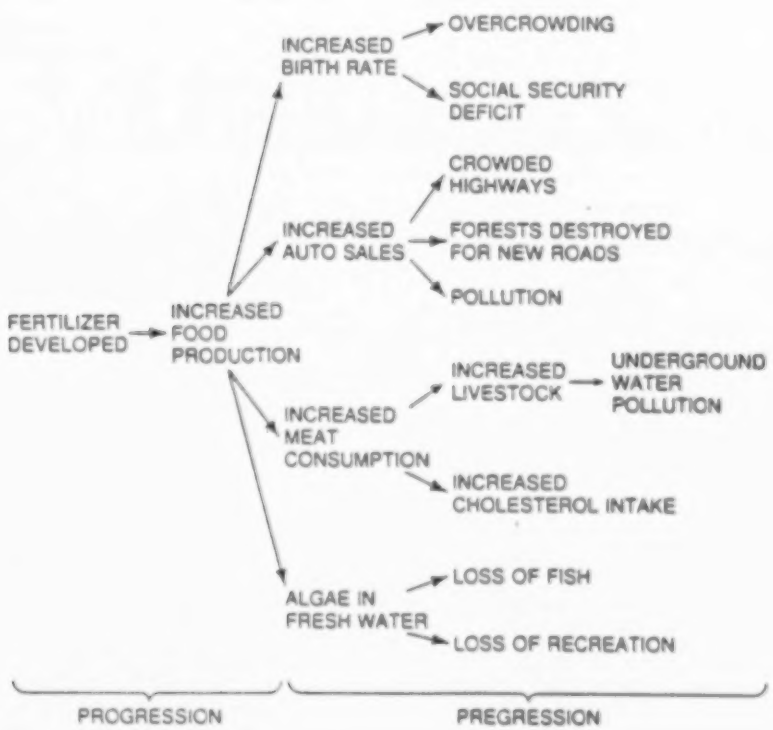
Progress and Pregress

I have always believed that a good question in social studies is like belly-button lint - you pick away at it, but it always comes back. Here are some good questions that you probably have looked at some of your social studies classes already.

What is progress? Who defines and measures it? Is progress inevitable?

In the next few classes we are going to explore questions like these and the differences that exist among us in how we think about these and related questions. The intention is not to answer these questions once and for all (remember the belly-button lint); but to open up a discussion of some of the things we take for granted about ourselves, each other, and society.

Consider the chart below as an attempt to distinguish between two important concepts in our writing and thinking about change. These concepts are progress and pregress. According to the chart, what is the difference between progress and pregress? (Source Kenneth Gergen *The Saturated Self* ((New York: Basic Books, 1991, p. 234).



C 3

Dying to be Thin: A Case Study in Pregression

Based on the film *Dying to be Thin*, in groups you will be asked to construct a Pregression Chart much like the one above. In viewing the film consider these questions that Kenneth Gergen raises in his analysis of how "progress" is *written into us* as a code that we accept without much reflection.

1. What are key first principles or assumptions that modernism builds for women about what is considered a "good body"? In other words what text produces the notion of the "good body", of the "body to die for"?
2. What do you think are the are key initial developments that led to new "meaning systems" for valuing attractiveness in a female body? (This is tricky! Do we go back all the way to Eve eating the apple?)
3. What changes in economics, politics and culture corresponded to this "new meaning system"? Put another way, how does the text of the "good body" get circulated in our society among us as individuals?

4.After viewing the film how does this quote from Gergen speak to you?
"As we have seen, the narrative of progress depends on establishing some form of "good" - a value or a goal. Establishing the goal lays the foundation for a social hierarchy in which each individual may be ranked in terms of his or her proximity to the goal. Such comparisons are made at the national level ... and the individual level. (Am I improving in income, education, weight, sports ability?) The games themselves are often favoured by those in a position to win them... Consider the many whose lives are wracked daily by the fear of failing on the one hand and the frustration of slow movement forward on the other. The promise of progress thrusts them into a lifetime struggle toward a summit never to be attained, evoking in the end a sense of failure, of having been unable to realize "what I could have been," should have been," or "wanted to be." For many others, who sense the futility of the game stacked against them, the preferred course may be a life of alcohol, drugs, sleeping in doorways, or crime.." (pp. 235-236).

Would you be willing to write about an event or occasion when you shared Gergen's questioning of modernism's sense of progress? Or do you think Gergen is over-stating his case - progress is in fact something that we all can look forward to? Please feel free to respond.

C 4

Grand Canyon Assignment

Assignment One
There are many possible readings of the film *Grand Canyon*. What do you see as a theme or reading that emerges from the film? To open up a discussion of the film, you will be asked to complete the following assignment and present it to the class.

In a group of four construct a Pregression Chart based on the film. Select as a starting point any number of terms listed below. Use the terms you select to extend out or analyze the causes of the problems or situations depicted in the film. (This is only a suggested list, please feel free to add to the list.)
human rights, justice, personal choices, political choices, economic choices, changing conditions (political/personal/economic), individualism, collectivism, power, capitalism, minority rights, citizen, security, role of the police. role of the media, private property, public property, environment, ideology, belief.

You will be asked to present your group's Pregression Chart to the class.

Evaluation: Organization of Chart /5
Clarity of Presentation /5

Assignment Two: Individual Response
Select any ONE of the options listed.
1.Recall your responses to the *Issues Survey* you completed in our last round together. Select one character from the film that you felt most closely shared the issue(s) that you felt were most important to you (i.e. of your top three). In an essay respond to this question based on your selected character's role in the film:
After I visited the Grand Canyon, I realized what I had to do was...
(complete the statement)

2.In the film Simon makes the statement: "Everything's supposed to be different from the way it is." Do you feel this way about some aspect of your life today? Perhaps consider your responses to the *Issues Survey* or any current feelings you have about the issues raised in the film. Write a poem or song lyric with this line embedded within it.

3. L.A. has been called "the junkyard of dreams" by one author (Mike Davis). Is this a theme that applies to your life? in Hinton? in this school? Think about it? Prepare a rap song (following the guidelines provided in class) with the title or chorus "junkyard of dreams". You will have the option of presenting this to the class.

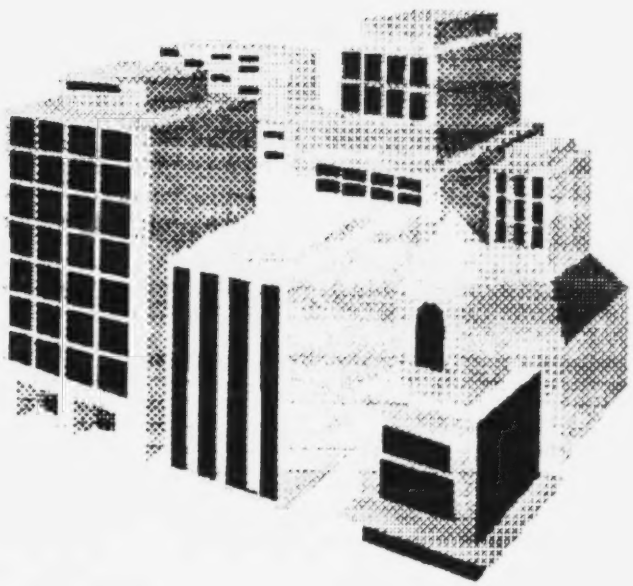
C 4

4. Perhaps the theme of pregression and "the junkyard of dreams" is one that runs through *Grand Canyon.* Based on an experience in your life or an adult that is significant in your life, present a written analysis of an event or experience in their life that proved to be a "junkyard of dreams". Refer to the terms in Assignment One to focus your analysis. Provide a Pregression Chart that supports the analysis.

5. Consider some of the themes that emerge from *Grand Canyon* (e.g. Everything's supposed to be different from the way it is.") Prepare a three minute video or a photo essay that speaks to a theme that emerges for you from the film. Refer to the selected terms in Assignment One to animate your production.

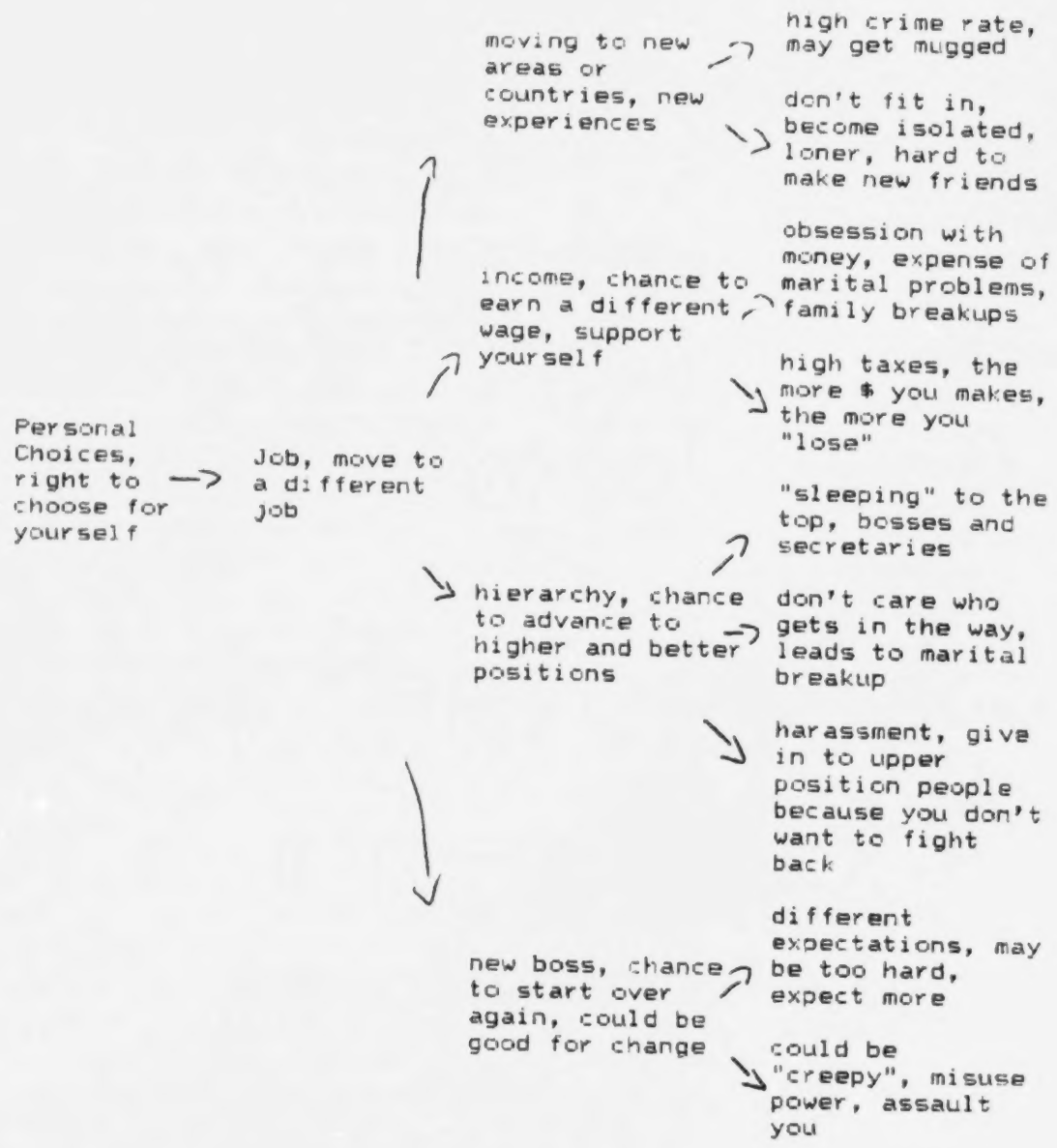
EVALUATION:
Description of the significance of the issues/themes presented /5
Clarity of expression related to the medium selected (i.e. poem, photo essay) /5

DUE: Wednesday, April 28



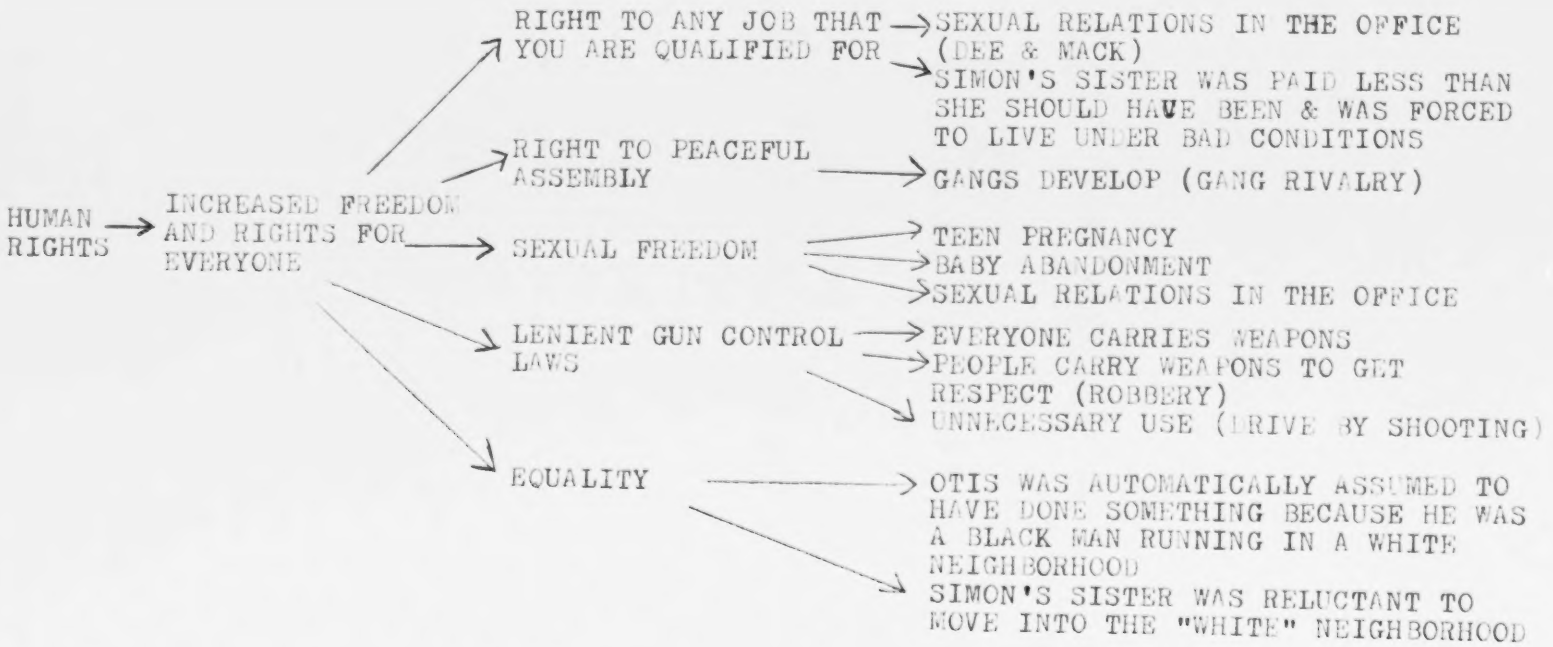
Sample #1

Personal Choices - Pregression Chart


Personal Choices, right to choose for yourself
Job, move to a different job
moving to new areas or countries, new experiences
high crime rate, may get mugged
don't fit in, become isolated, loner, hard to make new friends
income, chance to earn a different wage, support yourself
obsession with money, expense of marital problems, family breakups
high taxes, the more $ you makes, the more you "lose"
hierarchy, chance to advance to higher and better positions
"sleeping" to the top, bosses and secretaries
don't care who gets in the way, leads to marital breakup
harassment, give in to upper position people because you don't want to fight back
new boss, chance to start over again, could be good for change
different expectations, may be too hard, expect more
could be "creepy", misuse power, assault you

Sample #2

GRAND CANYON PREGRESSION CHART

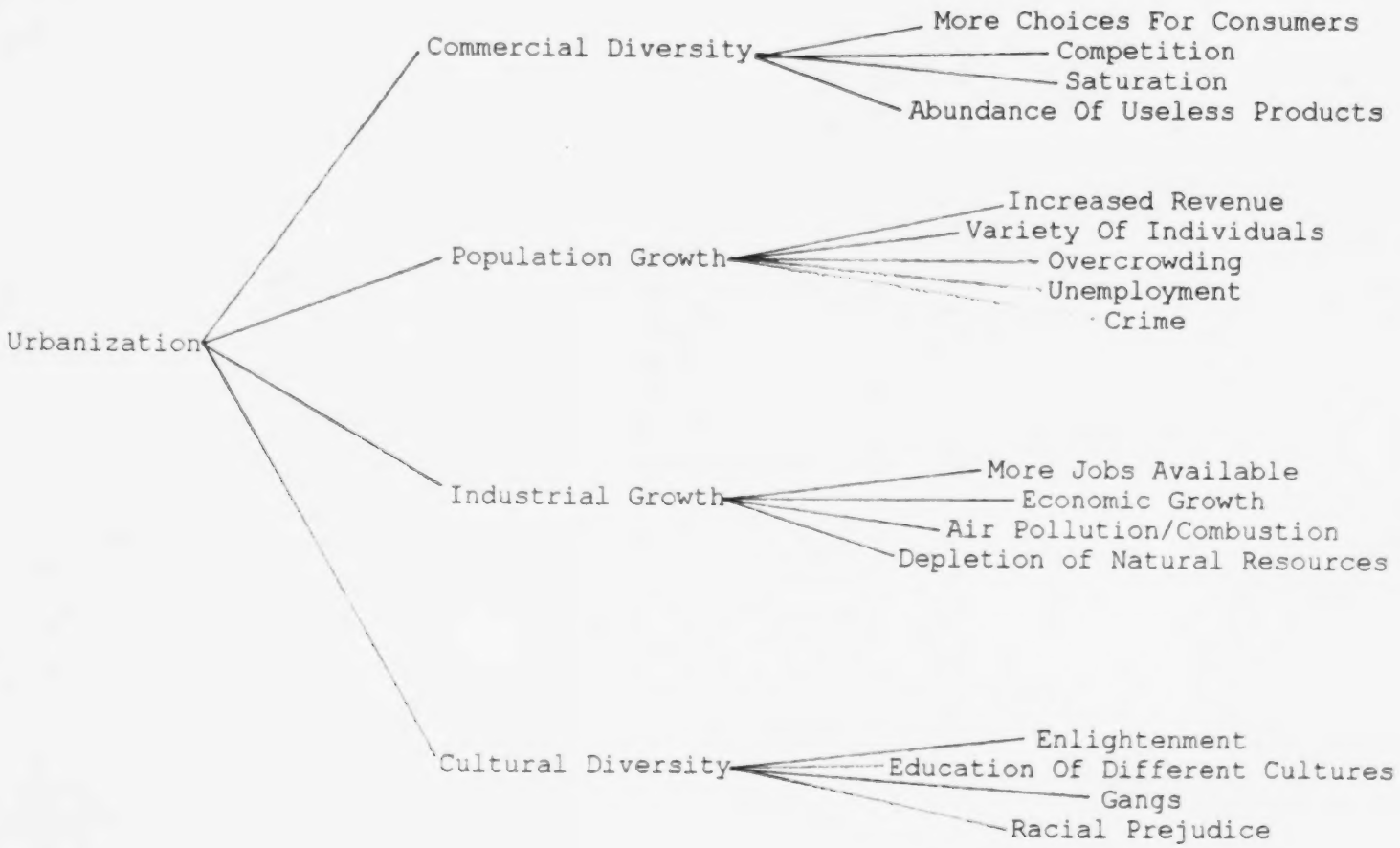

HUMAN RIGHTS
INCREASED FREEDOM AND RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE
RIGHT TO ANY JOB THAT YOU ARE QUALIFIED FOR
SEXUAL RELATIONS IN THE OFFICE (DEE & MACK)
SIMON'S SISTER WAS PAID LESS THAN SHE SHOULD HAVE BEEN & WAS FORCED TO LIVE UNDER BAD CONDITIONS
RIGHT TO PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY
GANGS DEVELOP (GANG RIVALRY)
SEXUAL FREEDOM
TEEN PREGNANCY
BABY ABANDONMENT
SEXUAL RELATIONS IN THE OFFICE
LENIENT GUN CONTROL LAWS
EVERYONE CARRIES WEAPONS
PEOPLE CARRY WEAPONS TO GET RESPECT (ROBBERY)
UNNECESSARY USE (DRIVE BY SHOOTING)
EQUALITY
OTIS WAS AUTOMATICALLY ASSUMED TO HAVE DONE SOMETHING BECAUSE HE WAS A BLACK MAN RUNNING IN A WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD
SIMON'S SISTER WAS RELUCTANT TO MOVE INTO THE "WHITE" NEIGHBORHOOD

C 5

Sample #3

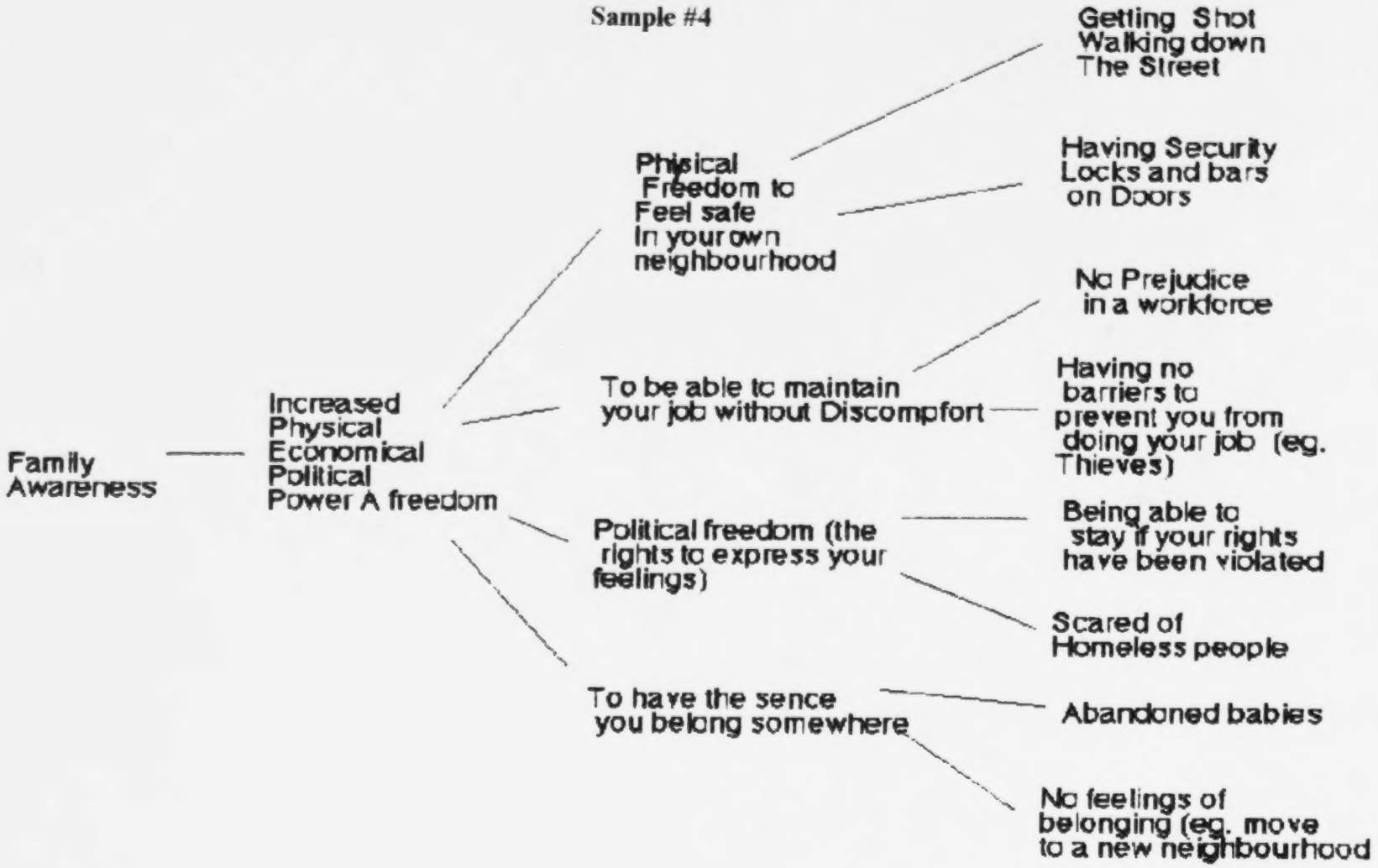
Pregression Chart

Urbanization



C 5

Sample #4


Family Awareness
Increased Physical Economical Political Power A freedom
Phisical Freedom to Feel safe In your own neighbourhood
Getting Shot Walking down The Street
Having Security Locks and bars on Doors
To be able to maintain your job without Discompfort
No Prejudice in a workforce
Having no barriers to prevent you from doing your job (eg. Thieves)
Political freedom (the rights to express your feelings)
Being able to stay if your rights have been violated
Scared of Homeless people
To have the sence you belong somewhere
Abandoned babies
No feelings of belonging (eg. move to a new neighbourhood

LEARNING BY TRIAL AND ERROR

I am sure that everyone, at some time in their lives, has had an experience that could be described as a "junkyard of dreams". It seems that it is practically human nature to have dreams of what they would like to have happen in the future, and it is easily understandable why many of these dreams are unrealistic or never succeed. Even with this in mind, though, there are always dreams that are achievable, but still fail for reasons that many people do not discover until they have experienced them for themselves.

The best example of a "junkyard of dreams" that I could think of did not happen to me, but to my mother. I guess you could say that it started with everyone having freedom in making personal choices about their own futures, in this case what career that my mom had decided to pursue. When she finished school my mom was sure that she wanted to become a nurse. This caused some problems with money because there was no nursing school in the immediate vicinity of her home, but she wanted to go so that she could live on her own, and be with many of her classmates who were also going there.

She reached the decision to go to a nursing school with many specific points of interest in mind that she thought could improve her lifestyle, but in the end only lead her to a "junkyard of dreams".

One was getting away from home and being independent from the family and to be with her friends, but this turned out to be negative because she became lonely very soon without her sisters and brother around. It also left her nothing to fall back on if something went wrong, like if she ran out of money or lost her room. It also showed her how unprepared she was to live on your own for even a little while because she just did not have all the necessary skills.

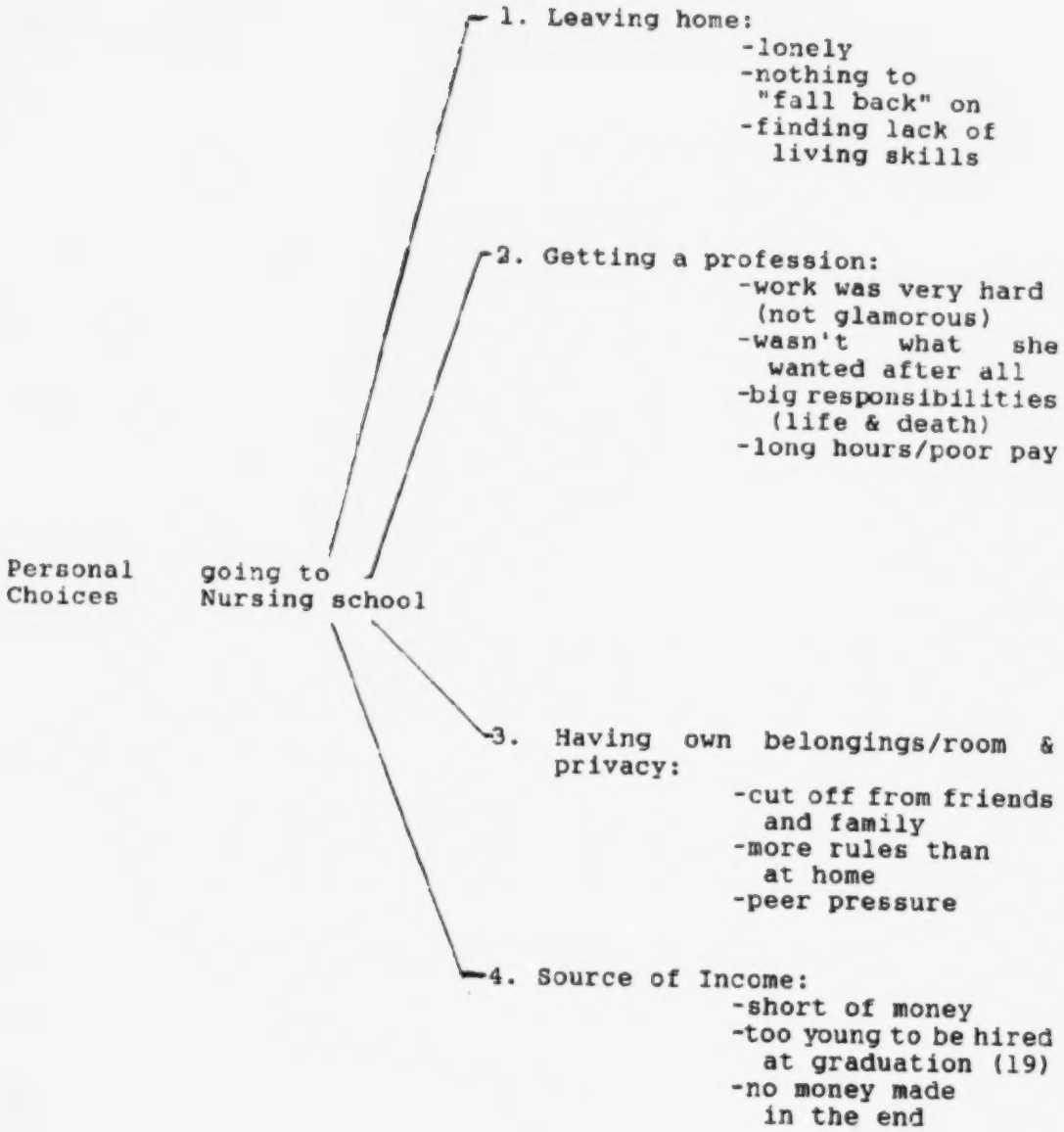
She had hoped to get into a profession with some interest to her, but this only led to her discovery of what hard work that being a nurse could be and that it was not as glamorous a profession as she had seen or thought. She also did not feel up to having all the heavy responsibilities which included other peoples lives, and discovered how poorly it paid and how long the hours were. These and other issues eventually led to her decision that this was not what she wanted to do with her life.

Being from a large family, she had never had her own room and belongings besides clothes and a few gifts and she wanted to be on her own with her own possessions for once. Soon she discovered though that being in her own room and on her own cut her off from her family and friends. The rule and regulations were much stronger than at home and that the peer pressure was too great for her.

The last major point was that she wanted to be her own source on income and not have to depend upon someone else all the time. Unfortunately this led to being continually short of money. Even when she graduated she could not be hired because she was only 19, a result of being put into school early, and the legal hiring age was 20. So as a result she never made any money from her studies in the end.

I would say that this follows the usual pattern of someone thinking something else is good until they try it themselves and then discover the "junkyard" that it really is. I think that it is human nature to learn by trial and error and these "junkyards" of dreams are common, everyday spin-offs of this way of learning. These "junkyards" teach us the harshest, but also the most important lessons that we will learn in our lives that will affect the outcome of nearly everything that we do after that, so they are necessary yet "hard to swallow" lessons in life that are basically what we base our society on.

FLOW CHART


Personal Choices
going to Nursing school
1. Leaving home:
-lonely
-nothing to "fall back" on
-finding lack of living skills
2. Getting a profession:
-work was very hard (not glamorous)
-wasn't what she wanted after all
-big responsibilities (life & death)
-long hours/poor pay
3. Having own belongings/room & privacy:
-cut off from friends and family
-more rules than at home
-peer pressure
4. Source of Income:
-short of money
-too young to be hired at graduation (19)
-no money made in the end

"Junkyard of Dreams"

The term "junkyard of dreams" is a good one to describe situations that at one moment are dreams and only seem positive, yet seem to end up as something that only becomes more negative over time.

Two situations in my life at one time seemed like this. I now look at these differently and see the positives, but at the time it seemed as if everything was against me and turned out wrong from how I had hoped. The two situations are when we went to the U.S. for holidays one years, and 2 or 3 years ago when I started to excel in school.

When we decided to go to the U.S. for some time during our summer holidays, our whole family figured it would be a lot of fun, and it would be nice to go to Oregon and see the ocean. We now had to rely on our car for transportation because it was the only means of getting around. This would be good because we now could be independent of our house as a "base", yet if something goes wrong, it can lead to trouble. Also, we all now had to temporarily live in tents of smaller space. This would either bring us all together more, or mean big sibling rivalry between my sisters and I. We didn't seem to have luck on our side. Just as we pulled into a tourist information centre, 900 km from home, our car broke down and would not start. We ended up having to pay a large amount of money for it to be repaired. We also had a lot of trouble finding a camping spot because it now was evening and very hard to find a place to stay, and had to settle on one with very poor facilities. Because we were in small tents and had to share a lot and be very patient, my sisters and I ended up arguing a lot which completely spoiled the atmosphere of holidays for my parents, my sisters, and me. Next thing, our tents could not handle a very bad downpour, so our tents got very wet and so did a lot of our other things. The tents had been able to handle the storms in Alberta, but gave up in the U.S. For all of us, it seemed to be the worst holiday we ever had.

The next situation, is having good marks, doing well, and being as one could say, a "goody-goody". In respect to the people you go to school with, all seem to have a different point of view, yet having good marks will take you further in life. Mostly for my younger sister, but also me, we decided we didn't ever want to smoke, or drink for the sake of getting drunk. This is good because both are illegal at my age, and it is better for your body, but what about one's peers, nowadays. After making this decision, people seemed to find "goody-goody's" to lose friends just because these "friends" wanted to be "bad" or fit in. This also meant that not smoking or drinking puts you into the "un-cool" club. Other people put a label on a person and don't bother to find out what is inside, meaning not many people want to lose their "cool" label to maybe make a friend. Teachers also seem to respect a person more when they have good marks, which should be good because you get along well with people of "authority", yet one's peers have very opposite ideas, and usually call it "sucking up". Once you get the respect of a teacher, they expect more of you which means you have to try

three times as hard to get a mark close to someone who hardly tries, but needs the marks. Respect also leads to favoritism of a person in the class, and all of one's peers only insult and cut down a person because of this, which lowers everything a person believes, making a person feel as though, if they were "dumb", it would solve everything.

In both of these situations, something that should have been good, ended up turning sour in its own way. I now would consider the negatives not devastatingly bad, but at the time, the hurt and cut a person down, and spoiled everything I had looked forward to, end up becoming a "junkyard of dreams".

"Junkyard of Dreams" - Pregression Chart

Camping to the U.S. for holidays
being away from Greystone and taking a break.
rely on car to support your needs of transportation.
car breaks down resulting in a large bill of money
if your car breaks down, it can make you lose time from committments of where you want to be at a certain time
tents of smaller living space provide homeyness
argue more with siblings
rain can wash away all hope and/or resources
Excelling in school
being well-behaved
don't participate in drinking and smoking
lose friends
not "cool" or fit in
respect from teachers
expect more from you, work harder
favoritism results in criticism from peers

C 8

Scum

(A metaphor for life in the city.)

There is a bucket
full of scum, by a mountain, near a tree.
The bottom is rusty
and only a small trickle can escape
But is filled again by the rain.

A careless person passing by,
throws a dollar in the bucket,
it plugs the hole
the bucket overflows,
but the scum is heavy and sinks to the bottom.
It can't escape.

Captured,
Captured by the things they can't control,
until the money rots away
and the rain stops falling.

Appendix D

D 1 Greystone School Division: Policy 3062
D 2 Read back, Board Meeting (May 5, 1993)
D 3 Read backs: May 11 - 13, May 21
D 4 *Pump Up the Volume!* Written Responses
D 5 *Pump Up the Volume!* Student Activity Outline
D 6 Student Essay: "Talking Hard/Standing Hard"
D 7 Student Story: "Black Sheep Talk Hard!"
D 8 Student Essay: "Hard Time/Good Time!"
D 9 Student Story: "Speech to Mom"
D 10 Student Story: "Writing Hard"
D 11 Student Story: "Deadly Make-up"

GREYSTONE SCHOOL DIVISION

Policies
Procedures
Guidelines
Manual

Policy 3062

225

Controversial Issues

POLICY

In principle, it is an objective of the Division's educational system to develop students' capacities to think clearly, reason logically, examine all issues, and reach sound judgements. The Board, therefore, approves the teaching of Controversial Issues in the classroom, subject to the following regulations.

REGULATIONS

1. Students in Alberta classrooms should not be ridiculed or embarrassed for positions which they hold on any issue, a requirement which calls for sensitivity on the part of teachers, students and other participants in dealing with such issues.

2. Students should have experiences in selecting and organizing information in order to draw intelligent conclusions from it. For sound judgements to be made, information regarding controversial issues should:

   a. represent alternative points of view.

   b. appropriately reflect the maturity, capabilities and educational needs of the students and reflect the requirements of the course as stated in the Program of Studies.

   c. reflect the neighborhood and community in which the school is located, but not to the exclusion of provincial, national and international contexts.

3. Schools shall establish, subject to approval of the Board, policies regarding:

   a. identification of controversial issues.

   b. treatment of such issues in local classrooms including procedures for:

      i. notification to parents.

      ii. students opting out.

      iii. submission of the teacher's unit plan to the principal for approval. The Unit Plan must include the objectives of the unit, the resources to be used in dealing with the unit, and the teaching strategies to be used.

4. Students, teachers and administrative staff, in consultation with appropriate interest groups, should have a voice in determining:
   a. the controversial issues to be studied.
   b. the texts and other materials to be used.
   c. the manner in which such issues are dealt with in the classroom.

Legal Reference:
Date of Adoption: **February 3, 1982**
Date of Amendment:

Read back Re: Board Meeting of May 5, 1993.

The Board Meeting presentation for the request to show *Pump Up the Volume* was a very interesting meeting. The segment of the movie shown depicted the discussion with Mark and the gay boy, Mark's subsequent introspective look into the feelings he had and then his decision to really carry his message out to the people.

The Board seemed to be pleased with the project itself and with the purpose of why this particular movie was to be shown. The immediate comments ventured around the need for these types of topics to be dealt with in school. The students had to have these topics brought up in order to deal with these subjects based upon the values they are setting within themselves.

One comment (by D. Brown) noted that if the kids didn't watch the show then, they probably were going to see it at one of their friends' houses. At least by showing it in class we could at least give a little direction to show how good decisions are made and, perhaps, even indicate where poor decisions might lead.

Only one Board member was not in favour of the exercise. His concern, and a potentially valid one at that, was that the kids might question the rules and values set out by the parents. The interesting thing was that the other trustees, all save Lori Smith, proceeded to question him on that premise. They felt that the kids would not rebel just over a film and that if the values preached by the parents were sound ones, they would still follow them. It was through their comments that John Dodds was swayed to vote in favour of the proposal. As such, the final vote was 7-0 in favour of showing the video in class, even though Doug was still a little hesitant to agree. Nonetheless, they all wished us well in our venture.

It was an interesting process, for us as well as for the Board itself. As Debbie Carlings noted to me after the presentation, she wasn't sure what the big deal was anyway. Most of the kids had already seen it and other movies which might be worse. Secondly, all the other parents had signed their consent forms and we were not in the order of putting forth censorship based on the beliefs of one student.

It was a very interesting meeting and meaningful exercise and I'm pleased it worked out as it did.

Read back to film (May 11-12)

In general, all the students seemed to enjoy the movie *Pump Up the Volume!* The classes were all pretty consistent in their views and the comments generated by the movie itself. The initial masturbation scene was found humorous by all students. There was some soft laughter at the onset but then almost a silent sigh of relief when they saw that Hard Harry wasn't really masturbating. I think this idea is still a little sacred and not one that people discuss out in the open.

There was also the giggling and laughter at the point where all the students were massing for their protest. The giant penis probably got the most laughs, though where it went to after the playing field is anybody's guess. The comment of Harry being able to "smell a lie like a fart in a car" drew some snickers as that's one example most students can relate to. Another example where all classes laughed was at the mention of when you commit suicide you "shit your pants" and also the "load in your shorts". Laughter was also common to all classes when Mark's Dad thought he and Nora were doing some things in the basement, "You've been a bad dog". Also, the girl who gave the "finger" to the Principal.

There were a few differences though. The 20A's had a bit of an "ughh" when the lizard ate the grasshopper while none of the other classes had any reaction. One interesting comment from a girl, was as to Paige and ".. is she really that pretty?" This was a question to a boy and his response was that she was okay. A question as to what a boy sees as pretty as compared to the opinion of a girl. The same girl also noted the contradiction of when Paige was to address the parent meeting. "Paige be quiet, then Paige come back and speak. What's she supposed to do? Can't they make up their minds?" One other question was asked by a girl when, in all sincerity she asked, "that doesn't happen here - does it?" I think she believed it didn't (the file examination and the subsequent expulsion) but was not really sure. The students aren't very sure of what does go on and, through further discussion, not very trusting of the system. Perhaps things like that do go on without their knowing. The only other comment particular to this class was, again from the girl asking for clarity as to prettiness, when Nora changed her clothing style after the evening with Mark. Her comment was, "one minute she's totally punky and the next minute she's like a dress code. Can't she make her mind up?" Later on the class also commented that the "fired English teacher should just go for it when she was after the files. "Just go for it. What are they going to do, fire her?"

Again, all classes noted the taking off of the sweater by Nora. It was noted that she was "forward", "pretty sudden" while one boy in SS 20D added in a "go down, ya" while turning to his buddy to look for reaction and/or support. I believe that the girls picked up a little more on Nora's comment to Mark that "you make me nuts". The guys seem more of the bravado and go for it while the girls were more of the understanding and passionate type. In the end, I think they were all glad that the message did get out and that the Principal got canned. It would be interesting to have the kids think up the beginning of a sequel. What happened in the end to all the people? The classes were split at the end as to the conclusion. Some liked it, some thought it was "cheesy".

They also seemed to like the part where the FCC man was "under siege". They seemed to feel for the plight of the students and the wrongness of what was going on. It was a just situation and the gov't boys were duly getting what they deserved.

In essence, the kids seemed to enjoy the show and realized that what was portrayed is something they can't really grasp. These things couldn't happen here. I think they were a little amazed with our story of kids getting expelled, or not being allowed to write a diploma exam in the Edmonton schools. Maybe what was portrayed isn't all that far away. Hopefully, the quietness and attentiveness was due to an interest in the film and not to the heat of the classroom.

Read back to May 13

The comments and discussion of the film *Pump Up The Volume!* led me to believe that the students had viewed the movie in a very favorable manner. The students basically felt that what Hard Harry did was right. The need to bring up issues to get things to the forefront. One of the boys in the SS 10C group indicated that issues needed to be brought up and solved. When questioned about whether all issues were solved or solvable, the indication was that the issue had to brought to the surface. From there it might be dealt with to a final outcome, or it might not. The primary point was that if things aren't dealt with, then they often turn from something small to something that's blown out of proportion.

An underlying premise was that people should do something they believe in. However, most also felt that their participation would be determined by the consequences from their action. If their was no risk of getting caught and punished, then there was no problem. They also felt that it would be easier to be in HH's situation than their's. In a big city nobody knows you or you can go elsewhere and get "lost" in the crowd. In a small town (eg. Hinton) people know everybody and often you get caught before you even do anything.

There was discussion about leadership and how to make decisions and also the term of "followship" where a person leads by what the others want. "Rumourmongering" was mentioned and noted that people always seem to be more interested in someone else's life than that of their own.

The notion of "shame" and "guilt" were brought up. The students seemed to grasp the idea than shame is felt by oneself for letting down oneself while guilt is felt when you let the group down. Upon discussion, they had all felt shame or guilt to some extent. It was a feeling of: frustration, lower self-esteem, angry, scared, a "burning up" inside, denial and withdrawing inside, unsatisfied, useless, letting one down, "pissed off".

The feeling of hopelessness was also prevalent. They often felt, what's the use because nobody listens to them. When asked about issues they'd deal with at GHS (like Hard Harry), issues included:

- wearing of hats
- lack of mutual respect by teachers to students ("I used to respect him but not anymore after the way he's treated me"). They felt it was worse by the older teachers than the younger ones.
- harassment by the Administration, especially the Principal
- not being allowed to go outside on spares

- not being treated like they were responsible citizens
- being given the choice to fail if they wanted (tied in to spares and skipping if they chose)
- the 3 skip, unexcused absence policy resulting in being "blacklisted" from school activities
- not being able to wear the clothes of their choice
- having an open line "sex line" to deal with problems and concerns students might have (Hard Harry show)

Yet, with all their concerns, there were still very few students who would go not on the limb and risk the repercussion that might follow. They would rather gripe about the status quo and "not rock the boat, especially when you're sitting in it".

It seemed that the girls wee more inclined to speak out as individuals while the boys were more as blurting or mentioning as the group. The girls also seemed to be more aggressive about dealing with the issues. It seemed to hit home more that one should do something if you feel strongly enough about it. The boys, meanwhile, seemed a little more as if they were quite willing to just "go with the flow". As an interesting sidelight, one girl noted that she felt things would change for women in the future. This generation of women will do more and break down what previous generation have set up. Yet, despite the optimism, it was felt that a woman/girl could not have been as effective as Hard Harry. The laughs HH got for the fake masturbation would be interpreted as "disgusting" if a girl did it. Once again that double standard just like "if it's a guy he's a stud, if it's a girl, she's a slut".

They all want to do something, but most are too scared or apathetic to go out and get it done. It's a high frustration level as nobody listens to them and nobody cares about how they feel. They want to be held responsible for their actions as they do know what they want. It's a depressing future ahead, but most are optimistic that it will turn out fine for them.

They all enjoyed the film and were very candid and open in their comments after. They want to know why they can't do things, specifically and not just as generalization. For example, if it's disrespectful to wear a hat in school, they just who are they being disrespectful of? I think they do care a lot more about many things than they want to let on. This exercise was as useful to me for finding that out as it was to the students to vent their frustrations and to maybe see new ways/means to get their ideas across.

D 3

Read back to May 21

The finale to the project. All three classes started off the period by giving presentations based upon ideas of "Hard Harry" of Pump Up The Volume!. The issues noted by all groups were ones that the students could readily identify with. There was merit to what was being said and it was difficult to note that these are problems, many very serious, that do abound in Greystone High School . If nothing else, this entire exercise allowed the students to vent some of their personal frustrations as to problems they perceive within the school.

After the presentations the students discussed the charts they had provided information to earlier in the project. In all classes there were some raised eyes as to the results. A lot of chatter was heard as the groups tended to pick out things they were surprised at. One of the common comments heard by all classes was the word, contradiction. Seems that many responses were inconsistent. One suggestion as to why was that perhaps the question were too open to interpretation or too broad and needed to be narrowed down somewhat. All agreed with the contradiction of girls having less self-confidence. One comment was to the effect that girls can use this as a crutch for people to help them out while boys need confidence as they are the big providers. An interesting comment by one girl was that if girls gained more confidence, then maybe the problems of prostitution, abuse, etc. would go down. Also tied into this was the comment that when girls drink and get drunk, they do gain more confidence as they lose their normal inhibitions.

Women and drinking more than boys was noted. A possible reason noted by several girls was the fact that they do it less often than the boys. Therefore, they tend to look forward to it more and thus tend to go for the gusto moreso than the boys. Another common comment was the lack of "trustability" of adults as to why kids talk more to peers and why more enjoyment gained from pets than parents. There were snickers at this finding, but students were quick to point out that it was accurate. A sad state of affairs one noted, but "...they (pets) don't tell you what to do". The issue of standards was raised and a thought that girls more concerned and worried about things because guys have lower standards. Not total agreement on that thought but a true belief that girls more concerned with future plans (thus more worries) while boys more concerned with the present. "Have to provide now, so why worry about the future. We'll deal with that when it comes up".

Another common concern was the issue of truthfulness and honesty. Desired by all but our society and times too concerned with materialistic things so people get hurt as we try to get all we can. "People want money and power and there is little care for others, honesty is out". Yet, they all want it or, at least, they'd like to have somebody or be with people who have it. Yet, this whole concept was summed up by one student who noted that, "...we treat others as we think they'd like to be treated". We aren't often truthful as we don't want to hurt their feelings so we say nothing or we lie to save their feelings. In the long run it doesn't help anyone, but we feel better for it.

Girls were felt to be more degrade than boys and maybe this was a result or a cause of their lack of self-confidence. And this degradation they took far more personally than the boys who normally just shrug things off or make a joke of it. Interesting to note the thought the 20D class put forth when J.C. mentioned that the girls really do have the power, especially in dating and personal relationships (as noted by a boy in the class where guys suck up big and girls then decide), therefore, they are a threat to men. A few laughs, a couple of catcalls, and some banter by the girls. But deep inside, I don't think they really bought into the idea, aside from the sexual control girls obviously have.

I feel the entire exercise was very useful to the students as well as to myself. It really did give them an insight as to the feelings and thoughts of the other sex. Changes in character was also evident as some of the "macho-ness" of a few guys came off as they realized maybe they weren't as important as they thought they were. Also, the students were able to see how to make changes and the problems which might result if one chooses poorly. Above all, to make and bring about change one has to take risks and one must then decide if the potential gain is worth the risk or the consequences brought about by failure or

the challenging of authority. Some students were moved to question what goes on and to look at the problems they face today - at school and in their own lives. Hopefully, they'll work to deal with these in a positive and effective manner. Now just have to convince them to "Talk Hard" and "Stand Hard" if there is something that they truly believe in that needs attention and change.

D 4

Pump Up the Volume! WRITTEN RESPONSES

Your chance to *Think Hard! & Write Hard!*

Complete the questions after you have viewed the film.
A paragraph or two is recommended for each question.
Think Hard! Write Hard!

1. Could Hard Harry have been played by a girl? Why/why not?
   If so, how would the movie have been different? the same?
   Give it a title! (No 'Hard Harriet' answers either!)

2. Sartre said, "No one can be vulgar alone." (Obviously he didn't know Mr. Phillips.) Grossing people out seemed to be a major part of Hard Harry's strategy to get his audience mobilized.
a)What do you make of his vulgarity? What was the impact of his vulgarity on you? Does this represent an realistic aspect of your experience of being a teenager in Hinton?
b) Was the vulgarity important for his identity and effectiveness as an activist? Or was the vulgarity something that the movie producers thought would appeal to you as a 'young person'. (I am always suspicious of what movies and t-v try to do to my little mind - I'm starting to think that Blossom would make a better Prime Minister than Kim Campbell.)

OR: Is this a stupid question? (One student told me that the only vulgarity was on the part of the adults and school officials). Comments?

3. As the film ends we hear a number of pirate radio stations inspired by Hard Harry breaking onto the air. Imagine one of them is in Hinton. Identify two issues that your program would focus on. Are they different/ similar to Harry's?

4. Would you like to comment on any aspect of the film? (or our work to date?)

Pump Up the Volume! STUDENT ACTIVITY OUTLINE

Select any One of the following activities.

Due:_____

1. Harry calls for his listeners to *Talk Hard!* At one point in the film one of the female students confronts the news camera and chants *Stand Hard!*

a) In your experience can you think of an incident when you have wanted to *Talk Hard* or *Stand Hard*? Perhaps think about situations at home, school, or at work, with your friends (i.e. at parties).

b) In your community or in the world today can you think of people who *Talk Hard* or *Stand Hard?*

In an oral, written, or visual presentation (video or photo essay) describe an example from a or b. Consider the following:

What does it take (personally) to Talk Hard or Stand Hard?
When is it appropriate to do so? (for you, for others?)
What are the risks in talking or standing hard? (for you, for others)
What are the consequences of resisting authority? (of not resisting?)

2.Consider a social issue from your personal *Issues Survey* that you completed in February.
You are Hard Harry. Prepare a radio program inspired by Hard Harry's format that speaks about your issue(s).
Your broadcast will be presented to the class only if you choose to do so.

3. Read the article "Talking Straight and Speaking Equal". This article explores research on the acquisition of the 'female voice' and shows how girls learn early not to have a voice in public. The article concludes by urging women to "say what you mean and mean what you say." In an essay respond to this question:
In another way, is this author urging females to talk hard? What differences and similarities do you see in the two sources (the film and the article) and how they treat the issue of females speaking up? Include your own experiences and observations where approriate.

4.This movie seems to locate *Talking Hard* as an outward public activity. Yet some people might say that you can *Talk Hard* in other ways, more private, more personal ways. Have you ever felt you wanted to *Talk Hard* or *Stand Hard* but chose to so in ways that no one knew but yourself? (e.g. symbolic gestures, personal thoughts, disruptive, subversive?)
In a written anecdote describe this experience. Give it a title.

D 6

Talking/Standing "Hard"

Talking or standing "hard" is not for everyone. Few people will back their beliefs and thoughts by taking a stand on or even saying it, they may not because of peer pressure, apathy, or because they don't think that it will help any. Despite this there are still numerous people in the world today who stand out when standing/talking hard is mentioned to me.

Personally, the first people who come to my mind are leaders of minority groups, people like Nelson Mandela and numerous others who take the risks to voice and stay with their opinion. It takes a great deal of courage for people to speak out against those who are more powerful than you, it takes even more intelligence and knowledge to be successful, and most important of all you need to be a leader who is respected to succeed.

Talking or standing hard should also have a good reason behind it, not personal gain or revenge. If used properly it can be used to create a lot of good results, but if used wrongly it becomes unjust, seems selfish, and gets disregarded or rebuked. I don't mean that the issues have to be large, like racism in South Africa or some traitorous military dictatorship, but you have to be involved or have a good understanding of what you are standing for. A stand loses all power when people begin to join it simply for publicity, popularity, or because everyone else is.

You also have to be ready to suffer the consequences of your actions. People like Mandela are constantly being arrested, beaten, or even executed; these are extreme cases but no matter what issue you may "stand hard" on, there will always be those who oppose you and penalties or punishments that may be given to you. Even if nothing is physically done to you, you and people siding with you could still suffer consequences both as degrading and devastating. Examples of these could be things like losing friends, losing respect and dignity, and other more phycological "punishments".

Many people dislike those who rebel against authority and see all of them as trouble makers who should be punished or disregarded by the public. Authority dislikes those who stand against it even worse than common people and the people in power often severely punish those who aren't in agreement to their values, policies, or way of thinking, Mandela and other South Africans have been jailed over the years and many minority leaders have been killed in other countries as extreme examples more commonly it ends in a lawsuit, job loss, loss of friends/respect, or a suspension of some sort.

But even with this huge downside for those who are involved, look at how many good things have been brought about because someone had the guts to stand/talk "hard" on an issue (freer South Africa, numerous changes to laws, the United Nations, U.N. peacekeepers, language rights, equality between races and sexes in some places, and nearly infinite other larger and smaller things). I believe that we would be nowhere as a society today if no-one ever stood up for what they though was right.

BLACK SHEEP - TALKING HARD!

We are in a new time of thinking and of acting. The notion of "Stand Hard" or "Talk Hard" seems to be spreading throughout our society. The nineties are opening more doors to those that would never have let their opinion be known ten years ago and the trend is becoming dangerous to anyone who opposes it. This idea of taking a stand is rapidly growing and many more people are gaining freedom and release from what they were being oppressed from. This new idea of expressing your thoughts and getting exactly what you want is a sure road for everyone, especially women.

Though the idea of "Standing Hard" seems rather simple, there are many things that the person attempting to do it must have. The personal qualities required are things that you are brought up with, or things that you have been taught during your struggle for independence. To be able to be an individual before confirming to the groups needs is important and the motivation to do something must come from within yourself. You have to be willing to be different and take the risk. The results are not always positive, very often the only thing gained is more experience for future attempts. By putting something on the line people seem to be more acute to what they are trying to achieve and the risk that they are taking seems much more realistic. Ultimately the final decision is up to the individual and the results of the action must be taken accordingly.

I am being brought up in a home where equality between women and men is always apparent. I believe that it is because of my upbringing that I have the strength and capability to be an individual. I am able to stand up for myself and express my own opinions. I also believe that I am equal and have the same rights and responsibilities as any Canadian citizen, man or woman. I have the power to be who and what I, and only I, want to be. It is because of my parents, and the things that were indoctrinated into me, that I chose to oppose some popular beliefs in the tree planting business. I had wanted to do this particular summer job for a long time and when an ad came out in the newspaper I immediately called for an interview. I was granted this interview and prepared for it like any other. I dressed appropriately and prepared my file more than adequately. The moment that I walked into the interviewing room, I knew that I was in for a lot of work. The look that I received from the man (the one that I now know is the boss) was one that would have sent many people crawling into a corner for shelter. He was a rugged, messy and unkept man, compared to me who looked as though I was trying to get into the modelling business. I shall never forget the stance that I took and I began to "Talk Hard". The impression that I got from the man was one of - you can't so this job, it's too dirty, tough and all round physically demanding. I began my rounds of convincing, telling him that I could do anything that I set my mind to doing and that just because I was a girl didn't mean that I wouldn't be a super tree planter. I continued, making this man believe that I was the one and only tree planter good enough for him was my goal, and I succeeded. Only minutes before I began my interview, a boy of about my age had walked into the room and applied for the job

without success, and I knew that because I had shown the "main man" who I was and what I knew that I could do, I got the job.

Since the interview I have helped two of my female friends get the tree planting job, one that they may not have got had I not done what I did. We have been out planting for a few weeks and I enjoy it and I am as able as I said that I would be. The man who chose me did so because of my character and mind and not because of my sex. He probably began by thinking that in the short run by choosing a boy instead of a girl he might make more money, but in the long run, because of my attitude, I would be just as efficient and able as all of the tree planters working for him. This is only one small example in my life of taking a stand, doing something different and succeeding. Although good fortune may not always occur, at least the individual, whoever is doing something different, is letting others see that they are not a white sheep, merely following the crowd, and they are letting their "self" be known. After all wouldn't it be better if you were the black sheep....? then for sure you would be noticed and action would be taken one way or the other.

HARD TIME/GOOD TIME!

Being hard is essentially, demonstrating publicly what you believe in. Any person can believe what they want but they must be strong to defend it. Most people will shy away when there are problems and not stand up for what they believe in. Due to peer pressure and other outside forces a person who is not hard will crumble into being a follower. Most people in our school are like this. In that they all want to be like one person so they would do what that one person says. This often leads the person to start doing things they normally wouldn't do. This is seen in Greystone as the parties that the school kids have. Many people wouldn't drink if the popular people didn't drink. But no one will stand hard.

Many times I have been in school and the pressure to go out and party is tremendous. I usually give into the pressure and go out and party. Being able to stand hard in a situation like this would be very hard to do. You must look inside yourself to see what the real feelings about partying, are like. Then when you identify what they are you must be willing to act on your feelings. This is very hard to do because you have to examine yourself and you also have to follow up on your feelings. If they are opposite to the group then you must not be afraid of what they will say. This takes much courage and determination to do. Because people will start to question you or make fun of you if you go against them, you must be willing to take the humiliation. So essentially to stand hard you must be a strong individual.

It is appropriate to stand hard when you are encouraged to do the wrong thing. Like my example of partying you must take a stand if someone is pressuring you. If you feel wronged by what people are doing or saying then you have a right to express yourself and stand for your beliefs. Anytime when you feel wrong about a situation you should do what you feel is personally the best choice. You are the only person that knows what is right for you so you shouldn't let people pressure you into situations you aren't comfortable with. By standing hard you might encourage others who feel like you, join you in your stand. Thus I feel it is appropriate to stand hard all the time so people will really know who you are. This way you won't hide your opinions and expressions to the outside world. Thus essentially contributing to the world.

D 9

SPEECH TO MY MOM

In my experiences as a teenager I have wanted to TALK HARD. One particular situation that sticks out in my mind happened this year , in 1993. I took part in the Toastmaster speech group at the beginning of the year. I did a speech that reflected one of the major problems in my life.

When I was young my parents got divorced and my mom moved out of town. I lived with my dad and still do. She moved around a lot after they got divorced and I did not get to see her very often. After a while she moved back to Hinton. She got a job as a legal secretary at Johnson McClelland, a lawyers office on the hill.

For the longest time she would not call me, talk to me, or even see me. I felt like she did not love me anymore. I got the impression that she was embarassed to have me as her daughter.

I wrote a speech about the way I felt and what I thought of her. It made me mad that she never had the time for me. I called her a lot of nasty names but I knew that it would not help. Nothing made me feel better.

I decided to do a speech in front of the Toastmasters speech group. I cried throughout the whole speech. When Iwas finished everyone clapped for me. I even made some of the people cried with me. I was told to show her the speech and see what she thought and talk my feelings and problems over with her. I decided to go for it.

We got into a big fight and I felt like killing someone. We came to an agreement that I would go over to her house every other weekend. We are really good friends now and I feel a sense of accomplishment. I feel like she is proud of having me as her daughter. I feel loved noe. I know that she likes to be my mom and she treats me like I want to be treated. I LOVE HER!

I have enclosed, along with my essay, a copy of the speech to my mom.

SPEECH TO MY MOM

I would like to talk to you today about my natural mother. I will explain the way that she made me feel along with the pain and hurt I felt in trying to deal with the problem.

From the time I was 2 years old, my mother has not been a part of my life. I often wonder what she feels and how she expects me to feel. I have tried to talk to her about my feelings but I feel as though she is afraid of being my mom and me being her daughter. I want despirately for her to accept me as her daughter but so many times she makes me feel confused, angry, hurt, and as if she does not love me.

There are so many days when I feel like she wants me to hurt inside. There are no simple "How about going for a pop?" There are no "How are you doing? Do you need anything?" and most of all , there are no "I love you"!! That really hurts me being that she is my mom and she does live in the same town as me. I want to see her as her daughter not just another someone off the street.

The last couple of times that I did go to her house I felt as though, because she does not know me, that she did not trust me. She does things like locking up her tapes and stereo. What does she think I am? Just because she does not know me she treats me as though I am a bad person.

What does she think I am going to feel? I do not know what to do about the way that she treats me. Does she think that I am not going to be hurt of confused? She makes me feel like she is a stranger to me. I do not want her to be a stranger to me. I want her to know me, I want her to feel my hurt when I am hurt, I want her to feel my anger when Iam angry, I want her to help me when I am confused, and most of all I just want her to love me.

In the past I have gotten her to buy things for me out of anger and invitted her to things that I have performed at out of envy. I have said things about her out of hurt, only because I do not know what to do anymore about getting her to love me as I am and accept me for who I am. I want her to love me like my step-mother does.

D 10

Writing Hard

"You never help! I ask you to help me and you always put it off until you're finished watching your t.v. show. I work hard all day just to come home and work harder!" Mu mom was yelling at me once again about not helping around the house. I sat back in my chair, crossed my arms across my chest and rolled my eyes.

"Go to your room. I don't want to see your face for a long time. I can see you rolling your eyes and I'm fed up with it. Don't expect any favours from me for while." I stuck my tougne out at her when she had turned her back. She spun around really fast but my tougne shot back into my mouth before she could see me.

As I ascend the stairs to go to my bedroom I think about my relationship with my mom. She favours my little brother, allows my sister to get away with murder and makes me clean the house. She always has time for them but not for me. My mom dosen't know any of my friends or what I do when I leave with them at night. She dosen't trust me.

As I lay down on my bed and turn on my walkman, to shut out the rest of the world, I write in my journal. This is how I deal with my problems and my feelings. I don't phone someone up and sob to them. I deal with them myself. People tell me that this is an unhealthy way of dealing with things, but its effective for me. I have developed a shell that no one can break through. This helps to prevent rejection, sadness and anger. When I write in my journal everything is talked about. Nothing goes unmentioned. This is my way of "Talking Hard" but really, I'm "Writing Hard".

Deadly Make-up

It was perhaps the coldest day of 1990 and my brother, cousin and uncle had planned this hunting trip for months. They had packed basically everything possible: extra layers of clothing, hot chocolate and coffee, and even liquid heat in case of a breakdown. I, being only thirteen, was completely disgusted at their excitement towards murdering an animal.

Well, at about 7am they were off. The day seemed to drag on for me, but of course I had a continuous smirk on my face.

After trudging through knee deep snow carrying large packsacks and their guns, they stopped by a river to wait for their prey. They quietly got comfortable and began sifting through their bags for ammunition. The box was found quickly, but its contents were quite the surprise. This box, which was supposed to contain items of death, contained six small empty lipstick containers.

Seeing as these lipstick containers had my initials on them, the culprit was obvious. To this day, they haven't said a word to me, but for the rest of the hunting season I never learned about their planned excursions until after they were gone.